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*PICTORIAL BIBLE*

*READING BOOK*



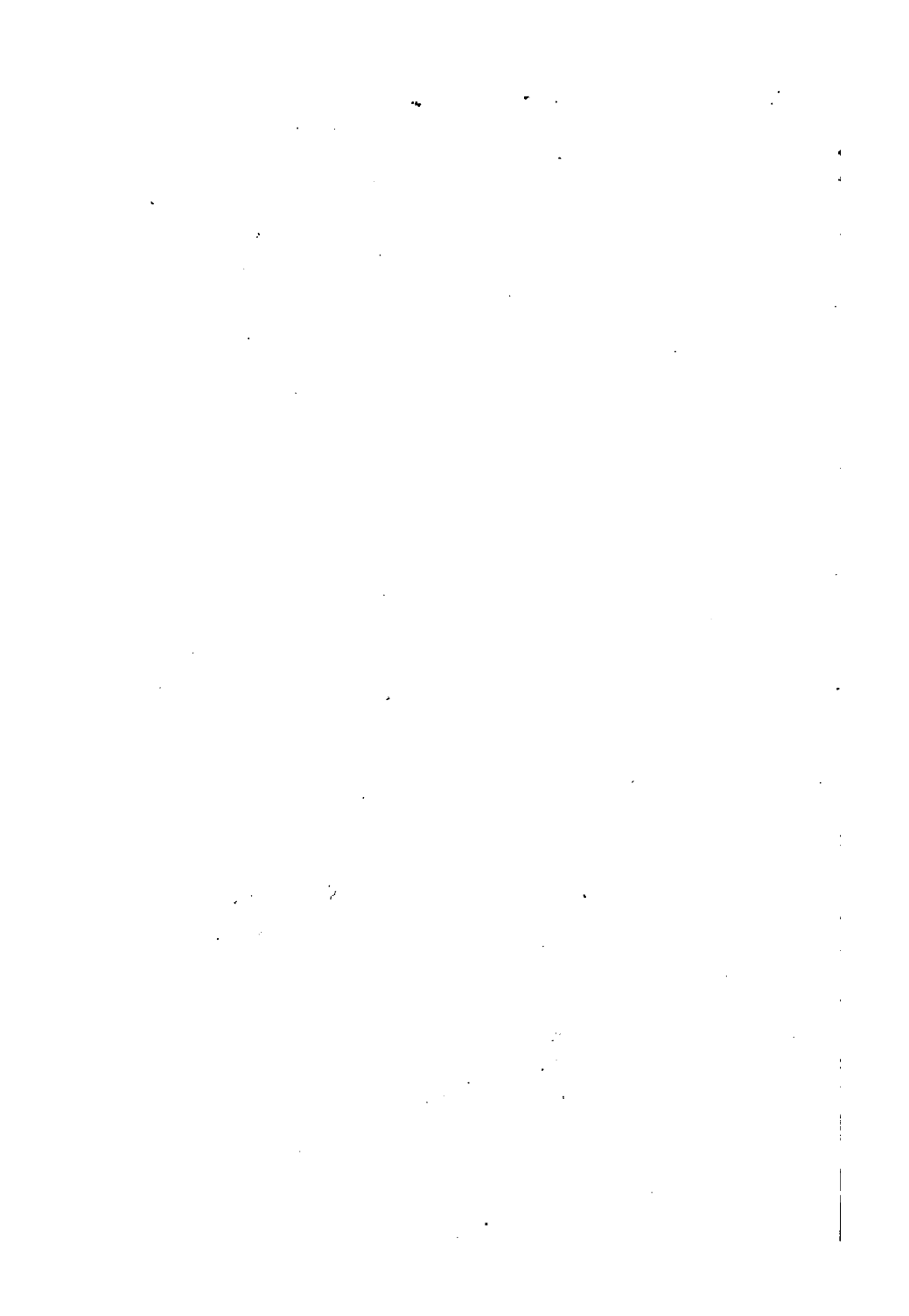


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THE  
PICTORIAL BIBLE READING BOOK:

*A Brief View of Sacred History;*

OR,

GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MANKIND CONSIDERED AS ONE  
CONNECTED WHOLE AND IN ONE CONTINUOUS  
NARRATIVE,

INCLUDING AN OUTLINE OF

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY. | NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY.  
HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

By C. T. WINTER,

*Author of "The Child's Gospel History," "The Child's Acts of the  
Apostles," &c., &c.*

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# PICTORIAL BIBLE READING BOOK.

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## Part I.

### TO THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

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#### LESSON I.

The Bible—Its purpose—The Old Testament—The New Testament—  
The kingdom of heaven.

THE BIBLE, or THE BOOK (which is the meaning of the word Bible), includes the Old and New Testaments, and is made up of many books written at very different times ; yet all these books have, in the main, one purpose, namely, to teach us about God's dealings with men, and, unlike other books, they were all written by men who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The books of the Old Testament tell us of the creation, of the fall of man—how he sinned against God and became unholy and liable to sin—of God's promise of a Redeemer ; and from first to last they testify of this Redeemer, and reveal, or make known to us beforehand, His Person and Work.

In the New Testament we see all the prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ.

The Gospels set before us Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of prophecy—the Redeemer whom God had promised to send into the world.

In the Gospels we have an account of Christ's holy life upon earth, His death upon the cross, and, lastly, His resurrection from the grave and ascension to the highest heaven.

In the Acts of the Apostles we see the Church of Jesus Christ set up in the world. This is the kingdom of heaven that our Lord declared to be at hand, and which, from a

small beginning, was to increase mightily and fill the whole earth.

The Books of the Old Testament were divided<sup>1</sup> by the Jews into the Law and the Prophets, and the Psalms.

These sacred writings were held by them in the greatest reverence, and were spoken of as the Holy Scriptures. The last book of the Old Testament is at least a thousand years later in time than the first book.

The Pentateuch, or Law of Moses, stands first in our Bibles, and it was written before the other books of the Old Testament.

It is divided into five books or parts—viz., Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; and this is the reason why it is called Pentateuch (Gr. *pente*, five, and *teuchos*, a book).

In these books we have a history of the world, but more especially of God's chosen people, from the creation to the death of Moses.

Throughout the Pentateuch we see how God kept in view His promise to Eve of a Redeemer by entering into covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—by choosing first a family, and then a nation, by which this great promise of a Messiah should be held in perpetual remembrance; and in direct descent from this family, according to the flesh, and as one of the chosen nation, our Lord came in the fulness of time.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON I.

*Question.* What is the meaning of the word Bible?

*Q.* What are the two great divisions of the Bible?

*Q.* Is the Bible all one book?

*Q.* For what purpose were the books written?

*Q.* In what way are they unlike all other books?

*Q.* What do we learn from the books of the Old Testament?

*Q.* What else do the books of the Old Testament tell us?

*Q.* What do we learn from the New Testament?

*Q.* How did the Jews divide the Old Testament?

*Q.* Did the Jews value the books of the Old Testament?

*Q.* What books come first in the Old Testament?

*Q.* When did Moses write them?

*Q.* What are the names of the five books into which the Pentateuch is divided?

*Q.* Why are they called the Pentateuch?

*Q.* What, then, is the meaning of the word Pentateuch?

*Q.* About what did Moses write in Genesis?

*Q.* What else does Moses tell us in the Pentateuch?

*Q.* What especially do we see in the Pentateuch?

## LESSON II.

Genesis the foundation of sacred history—Meaning of the word—Moses gave it into the care of the priests.

GENESIS, the first book of the Bible, and the first division of the Pentateuch, is the oldest, and, in some respects, the most remarkable and important book in the world.

It is the beginning or foundation of sacred history, and without it the history that follows would be unintelligible—we should not be able to understand it. Without it we should know nothing for certain about the creation of the universe—the world, sun, moon, and stars; nor of the fall of man and God's promise of a Redeemer. From Genesis alone we learn what happened in the world for more than 2,300 years—that is, from Adam to the death of Joseph.

If we ask how it is that the world is so full of evil, that there is so much sorrow and wickedness in it, that men are so often selfish and ungodly, and why, after a few years they die and pass away like a shadow, it is to Genesis again we must go for an answer.

This book is well named Genesis, for “Genesis” means *birth* or *begetting*. In Genesis ii. verse 4 it is said: “These are the generations (or births) of the heavens and of the earth”; but in the Greek version of the Old Testament this passage is translated, “This is the book of the *Genesis* of the heavens and the earth.”

When Moses had finished his book he gave it into the care of the priests of the Israelites. It was placed by the ark, and once in seven years the priests read it to the people. “These words that I command thee this day,” said Moses, “shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut. vi. 6, 7).

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON II.

*Question.* What is the name of the first book of the Bible?

*Q.* Of what period of the world's history have we an account in the book of Genesis?

*Q.* What is the meaning of the word Genesis?

*Q.* What did Moses do when he had finished his book of the Pentateuch?

*Q.* What did he say about the book to the people?

## LESSON III.

The creation—Work of the first day—Creation of light—Meaning of the word day.

*Read Gen. i. 1—5.*

WE live in a beautiful world and rejoice in many of its sights and sounds. We are glad when the dark winter is past and the spring brings back the bright sky, the sunshine, and the flowers, the songs of the birds, and the pleasant hum of the insects. At such times we wander with delight in the fields and woods, and, again, we admire the works of God as we gaze on the vast ocean, or gather shells and seaweed upon its shores. And when the sun sets in the crimson clouds, the moon and the flashing stars take up the wondrous tale of God's almighty power; but these first verses of Genesis remind us that once there was no world—that a long, long time ago there were no flowers nor sea nor shells, and no sun, moon, and stars. Instead of these beautiful things all was dark and silent—there was only God. Not that God was in darkness, for He is the "Light of Lights"; so that in heaven there is no need of the sun, moon, or stars, for God Himself fills heaven with light and glory; but where the earth and the sun and the moon are now it was quite dark.

Moses, in this book of Genesis, tells us that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

How long ago was this beginning? We cannot know, for Moses does not tell us. But what is the meaning of the word created? To create is to make things out of nothing. God alone can create. St. Paul says, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Man can *make* many wonderful and beautiful things, but no man can *create* one single seed, nor even one grain of sand.

For long ages the earth was not fit to be man's habitation. It was without form, there was nothing in it, there was no dry land, and darkness covered it; but a time came when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Then how great was the change. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." So now the Holy Spirit gives light to our hearts and creates them anew in Christ Jesus as He moves over the waters of baptism.

In this our world the Spirit of God brought light out of darkness, beauty out of chaos and confusion, and fitted it to be a habitation for man. God saw that the light was good.

Light brings health, life, and enjoyment to our world. Without light no plant or tree or flower could grow and come to perfection. No animal could exist, everything would die. The day is the time for work, and both men and the lower animals rejoice in its light and warmth. While these last, trees, herbs, and flowers grow, seeds and fruit ripen, and men perform their many duties; but he needs rest likewise and sleep, and God so ordered it that a period of darkness should follow each period of light. Then men and animals repose and renew their strength. Light was created on the first day. The evening and the morning were the first day.

What is the meaning of this word "day" in the history of creation? Was this first day a day of twenty-four hours? Are we to reckon it as one of God's days or one of man's days? We must bear in mind that when this first day shone forth those great lights, the sun and the moon, had not been lighted up to give light to the world, to divide the day from the night, and to measure and regulate times and seasons. For this reason, and, still more, because it seems plainly written down in that wonderful record of creation that we find in the crust of the earth, we must believe that the "days" of creation were God's days and not man's days, and with God a thousand or a million years are as one day. We only know that the first day of creation began with a night of darkness, and that this night was followed by a glorious day, for God said, "Let there be light, and there was light"; but how long that "day" and the succeeding days lasted we cannot tell.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON III.

- Question.* Has this world existed always?  
*Q.* Could we have found out of ourselves how the world began?  
*Q.* Does the Bible tell us when God made the heaven and the earth?  
*Q.* How long ago was that "beginning"?  
*Q.* What is the meaning of the word "create"?  
*Q.* What did God create on the first day of creation?  
*Q.* Was this first day of creation a day of twenty-four hours?  
*Q.* What reasons have we for supposing the days of creation to have been long periods of time?

### LESSON IV.

Work of the second day—The firmament or atmosphere.

*Read Gen. i. 6—8.*

On the second day of creation God made the firmament. What is the meaning of this word firmament? Firmament means an expanse, and an expanse is something expanded.



spread out like a curtain. This expanse was the atmosphere. *Atmos* is a Greek word and means air, and the atmosphere is a sphere or globe of air wrapped round the world and covering every part of it. This expanse of air was necessary to fit the earth to be a habitation for man. Without air there can be no life and no sound. If the atmosphere were taken away from our world life and sound—speech, music, and all the hum of the busy world—would be followed by silence and death. Besides this, the firmament or atmosphere was to divide the waters from the waters—the waters above from the waters below—the clouds over our heads from the seas on the surface of the earth. “The Lord stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in” (Isa. xl. 22). God called the firmament “heaven.” The word “heaven,” like the word “day,” has different meanings in Scripture. We read of “the birds of heaven,” “the clouds of heaven,” and the “winds of heaven.” Here, then, “heaven” means the firmament or atmosphere which God stretched out as a tent for men to dwell in on the second day.

Then there is the heaven of the stars, which is so vast that it is quite impossible for us to understand its immensity—its height and length and breadth—yet this is the heaven of which it is said, “As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy towards them that fear Him” (Ps. ciii. 11).

But there is yet a third “heaven” mentioned in Scripture, and that is the “heaven of heavens.” This is the heaven in which God more especially dwells, and where His unspeakable glory is manifested. It is the heaven of the angels and the heaven to which our Lord Jesus Christ ascended when He “passed into the heavens,” and where He now dwells at the right hand of the Father.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON IV.

- Question.* What did God create on the second day?
- Q.* What is the meaning of the word firmament?
- Q.* What are we to understand by this expanse?
- Q.* Of what do the clouds consist?
- Q.* What did God call the firmament?
- Q.* Is this the heaven where God especially dwells?
- Q.* What is the meaning of the word atmosphere?
- Q.* Was this atmosphere necessary to fit the world to be a habitation for man?
- Q.* What other use was the atmosphere made for?
- Q.* What is the meaning of this expression?
- Q.* Does Scripture speak of any other heaven?

## LESSON V.

Work of the third and fourth days—Separation of the land and water—  
Creation of plants—The great lights.

*Read Gen. i. 9—19.*

At the close of the second day the world was no longer a dreary globe without form, over which darkness brooded. God had created both light and air, and on the third day He still further fitted it for a habitation of man by three wonderful acts of Almighty power.

First He caused the dry land to appear. There was land already, but it was quite covered with water. So God said, "Let the dry land appear"—let it become visible. Then, as some think, certain parts of the land were lifted up high and dry above the water, and these formed islands and continents, which were soon to be covered with new life. This rising of the land caused the waters to flow into the great hollows and low-lying portions of the surface of the earth, and these large sheets of water God called seas. Thus "the Lord gave to the sea His decree." He "set a bound that the waters may not pass over nor turn again to cover the earth" (Ps. civ. 9; Prov. viii. 27).

But the greatest wonder of the third day was the creation of plants. The humblest plant is not only beautifully and wonderfully made, but from it spring other plants, each one of which has again the same power of reproduction—of producing other plants like itself; and so on for hundreds and thousands of years. Each tiny seed is a witness to the power and wisdom of God. Drop it into a suitable soil and from it will spring up a gorgeous flower, or a plant that is good for food, or a mighty tree of the forest. Seal it up in a bottle and bury it for hundreds, and even thousands, of years in a tomb or cave and it will retain its wonderful powers; for if planted in good ground it will probably produce a herb, or grass, or tree after its kind, fresh, green, and beautiful. If we study the works of God we shall see continually fresh proofs that in wisdom has He made them all, and that the earth is full of His riches.

God thus gradually prepared the world for man. Light and air were necessary that he might live in it; but he must eat as well as breathe to sustain his life, and for this purpose God caused the earth to bring forth grain, vegetables, and fruit.

On the fourth day God set lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth. We are not told that God created the sun and the moon on the fourth day, but that on the fourth day He lighted them up so as to give light to the world. The

lamp that stands in the street or in a house gives no light until it is furnished with oil or gas, and then when fire is applied to it it blazes out, and so the sun gave no light until touched by the finger of God. Some may say, How could this be when we are told that God created light on the first day? God did create light on the first day, but it was not gathered round the sun till the fourth day; and this agrees exactly with the discoveries made by geologists, those wise men who study the crust of the earth in these latter times. They believe that there was a time when the world was lighted in a different way to what it is now. But Moses had not dug down into the rocks, and he knew nothing about the animal and vegetable remains—the fossils that lie concealed in them. So we see that there was more in the words of Moses than he himself knew of. Besides being the lamps of our world, the sun and the moon were to be its time-measurers. God put in the heavens a great clock that should mark the times and the seasons, the days and the years. The blue vault of heaven that we see above our heads is the dial of this wonderful clock, and the greater and lesser lights, the sun and the moon, are its hands, and ever since God put it in the heavens it has never stopped nor failed to mark the times and the seasons. How wonderful are the works of God, and with what wisdom hath He made them all !

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON V.

- Question.* What was the work of the third day?  
*Q.* What other wonder happened on the third day?  
*Q.* But what was the greatest wonder of the third day?  
*Q.* What was God's work on the fourth day?  
*Q.* Must we believe then that the sun and moon were created on the third day?  
*Q.* Is it not said that God created the sun and the moon on the fourth day?  
*Q.* For what other purpose are the sun and moon intended besides that of giving light?  
*Q.* Amongst other wonderful works God put in the heavens a great magnificent clock that should never stop and never get out of order. Where do you see this clock?

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### LESSON VI.

Work of the fifth and sixth days—Creation of sea creatures and flying creatures—Creation of land animals—Creation of man.

*Read Gen. i. 20—31.*

STEP by step the world had been brought to perfection : it was no longer dark and without form and void. Light, air, dry

land, seas, plants, flowers, fruit, grain, and vegetables, a greater and a lesser light, a perpetual clock, had all been called into being by the infinite wisdom of God.

The earth was now fitted to be the habitation of living creatures, so on the fifth day God began the creation of the animal world. First He created all animals that spring from eggs, sea creatures and flying creatures, fishes, birds, and winged insects, reptiles, great fish-lizards, and other monsters of the deep.\*

Then on the sixth day God caused the earth to bring forth animals that live on dry land, great beasts of the field and forest, many of which are now no longer seen in the world.

That being, however, who was to hold the chief place in the world, and for whom the world was specially made, did not as yet exist. The world was now ready for him, and so, at last, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. i. 26). Man was the last, the most wonderful and the most important of all God's works of which we read in the first chapter of Genesis, because he was created in the image of God.

"Let us make man." In these words the Father takes counsel of another Person. But "with whom took He counsel?" asks the prophet (Isa. xl. 13, 14), and the Apostle Paul echoes his question, "Who hath been His counsellor?" (Rom xi. 34.) St. John answers both prophet and apostle, and says it was "The Word, who was in the beginning with God" (St. John i. 2, 3); and again He says, "Without Him was not anything made that was made."

Thus we see that the plurality of Persons in the Godhead is a doctrine dimly revealed from the very first.

So God made man in His own image, and let him have dominion over all the earth and over every living thing.

The Creator had now finished His work; and before passing on, let us observe that in many ways the history of creation contained in the first chapter of Genesis is found to agree with what men have discovered about it by studying the crust or outer portion of the earth, as well as by other means:—

1. It is proved that the world is round, as the Bible says it is.
2. That the world "is hung upon nothing," as stated in Scripture (Job xxvi. 7).

\* "Whales" is a mistranslation of the original word, which signifies animals of the lizard and serpent kind, especially the crocodile.

3. That when those vast forests, of which our coal-fields are the remains, the world appears to have been lighted in a different manner to what it is at present.
4. That all the dry land of the earth was at one time or another covered with water.
5. That the earth is surrounded by an atmosphere, and that this atmosphere has weight.
6. That this atmosphere divides the water below, on the surface of the earth, from the water that floats in the air over our heads in the form of clouds.
7. That the first great period of life upon the earth was an age of herbs and trees.
8. That to this succeeded a period of sea-monsters and flying creatures, fishes and birds.
9. That another great period was the age of great beasts of the earth, and of cattle.
10. That it is also proved that the earth became what it is gradually; that one kind of life has succeeded another just in the order we read of in the first chapter of Genesis; and that lastly, man was created to have dominion over the world and all things in it.
11. The telescope proves that the stars are not only about 1,000 in number, as was supposed by the ancients, but that to man they are, as the Bible tells us, numberless.

We must bear in mind, however, that the Bible is not intended to teach us science, but religion.

The history of creation in the first chapter of Genesis makes known to us this great truth, *that God created all things*,—that He made the world and all things in it, and the heavenly bodies.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VI.

*Question.* What was the work of the fifth day of creation?

*Q.* What kind of animals did He first create?

*Q.* What was the work of the sixth day?

*Q.* But what was the most important work of the sixth day?

*Q.* In these words, "Let us make man," of whom does the Father take counsel?

*Q.* Mention some of the ways in which the Mosaic history of creation agrees with the discoveries of men?

*Q.* In what other ways do revelation and science agree?

*Q.* What great truth is the Bible history of the world intended to make known to us?

## LESSON VII.

The seventh day—Man created in the image of God—Adam and Eve on trial—The temptation—The fall—Consequences of the fall.

*Read Gen. ii., iii.*

GOD having finished His work of creation rested on the seventh day. He blessed it and sanctified it. Separating it from other days He gave it to man as a Sabbath, a day of rest from labour, and a holy day on which especially he might seek after God.

God had declared that all things He had created were "very good"; and man, who was to have dominion over them, was not only good, as the other works of God were good, but he was created in the "image of God"—sinless, holy, happy. God had given him a spiritual nature—a soul as well as a body—by which he could love and serve God and hold intercourse with Him. God not only placed Adam in the beautiful world that He had created, and made him lord of it; but He prepared for him a paradise—a beautiful garden—in which he might pass his time in peaceful toil and glad intercourse with God. Besides every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food, two trees stood in the midst of the garden that were unlike any other trees, for they were the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. If a man ate of the Tree of Life he would live for ever. His body would never become old and feeble; and so it was a type or picture of the true Bread of Life which nourishes our souls and preserves them to eternal life. It was a type of Jesus Christ, His word and sacraments. It was an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. God strictly forbade Adam to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil under penalty of death. It was to be the trial of his obedience.

Unlike the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, Adam had no companion or helper meet for him, and God, seeing it was not good that he should be alone, caused him to fall into a deep sleep. Then, out of Adam's side God made or "built up" a woman. Thus Adam during this sleep or trance was a type of Christ in His death, and Eve was a type of the Church which was built up out of Christ's crucified body.

We do not know how long Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden in this holy and happy state; but it is certain that so long as they obeyed God their bliss continued, for they were sinless, and therefore they knew nothing of a guilty conscience, a troubled spirit, pain, sorrow, and death; and more

than all, they enjoyed the favour and friendship of God Himself.

But all this time an enemy was watching them and plotting their ruin. Satan, the Adversary, an evil angel who had rebelled against God and been expelled from heaven, was that enemy. Under the likeness of a serpent he tempted Eve to disobey God's command. "Is it true," he asked, "that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The woman yielded. Why should she not eat of a tree that was good for food and beautiful, and which besides would increase her knowledge? So she took the fruit and ate, and gave to her husband and he also ate.

Alas! what a change came over them. No longer innocent, they trembled at the voice of God. They now possessed, to their cost, a knowledge of good and evil. They knew that good consists in obedience to God, and evil in disobedience; and they have lost the good—innocence, happiness, the favour and friendship of God—and have come under the power of evil—sin, sorrow, and death.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VII.

*Question.* What did God do on the seventh day?

*Q.* In what way especially did Adam differ from the animals over whom he was to have dominion?

*Q.* What did this enable him to do?

*Q.* Where did God place Adam?

*Q.* What two trees stood in the midst of the garden?

*Q.* What was the Tree of Life a type of?

*Q.* Of what one tree did God forbid Adam to eat?

*Q.* Was this to be the trial of his obedience?

*Q.* Was Adam alone in the Garden of Eden?

*Q.* Did God say that this was not good for him?

*Q.* Did Adam and Eve obey God in not eating of the forbidden fruit?

*Q.* Did they gain by their disobedience?

### LESSON VIII.

The voice of God in the garden—God's judgment on the serpent—On Adam and Eve—First promise of a Saviour—Adam and Eve driven from Eden.

*Read Gen. iii. 8—24.*

THE punishment of Adam and Eve was swift and terrible. They felt it, first, in their own changed feelings—a sense of guilt and the dread with which they shrank from the presence

of God. "I heard Thy voice in the garden and I was afraid." Then came God's searching question, "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" Adam did not frankly confess his sin. He laid the blame on Eve, his companion, and even upon God. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

Then on the serpent first, and afterwards on Adam and Eve, God passed a righteous judgment. The serpent (or Satan, who had used the serpent as his instrument) was



ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN FROM EDEN.

cursed, and between his seed and the seed of the woman there was to be perpetual enmity. The seed of the woman would suffer in consequence; "Thou (Satan) shalt bruise his heel"; but thy (the woman's) seed will conquer in the end and bruise the head of the serpent—the old serpent, the devil—by destroying his power and raising man to a state higher even than that from which he had fallen. Sorrow and pain would now be more or less the portion of the woman; in sorrow should she bring forth children, and her husband should rule over her.



And Adam, because he hearkened to the voice of his wife, must henceforth eat of the fruit of the earth in sorrow, and the ground was cursed for his sake—because of his sin. Thorns and thistles would it bring forth to him, and only by perpetual toil—by the sweat of his brow—should it be made to yield the food necessary for his support. Moreover, a sentence of death was passed upon him: “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

But Adam and Eve were not driven to despair. In the midst of judgment God remembered mercy; for to them was given the promise of a Saviour. The victorious seed of the woman shall redeem them and all mankind; shall bring them back from the power of Satan, free them from the bondage of sin, and restore them to the love and favour of God. And all through the Old Testament Scriptures this promise was repeated to patriarchs and prophets; and for hundreds of years the coming Messiah was the great hope and expectation of the whole Jewish people.

This promise was mercifully intended to comfort Adam and Eve in the midst of their trouble; but the Garden of Eden might no longer be their abode; that they had forfeited; and all approach to the Tree of Life was guarded by a flaming sword lest they should eat of it and live for ever in their fallen and corrupted state.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VIII.

*Question.* In what way did Adam and Eve first feel the consequences of their sin?

*Q.* Did Adam frankly confess his sin?

*Q.* What was God's judgment on the serpent?

*Q.* Who was really this tempter of Eve?

*Q.* What was God's sentence on Eve?

*Q.* Was Adam also punished?

*Q.* What promise did God make to Eve?

*Q.* To whom does this refer?

*Q.* What was the immediate purpose of this promise?

*Q.* Did Adam and Eve remain in the Garden of Eden?

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#### LESSON IX.

Cain and Abel—Seth—The two sacrifices—Cain kills Abel—God's judgment upon him—The flood—Noah and his family—Noah's sacrifices—God's covenant with Noah, a type of the baptismal covenant.

*Read Gen. iv., vi., vii., viii.*

In due time children were born to Adam and Eve; but only three of them are spoken of in Scripture—Cain, Abel, and Seth. Two of these were types or patterns of very different

classes of men. Cain was the type of worldly and wicked men who despise the promises of God and are the slaves of Satan. Abel was the type of those who through faith and obedience inherit the promises, who lead holy lives, and are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Seth was the ancestor of those God-fearing men—patriarchs, prophets, and kings—by whom God kept His promise in remembrance, and of God's chosen people the Jews, one of whom became the mother of the Messiah.

Eve called her first-born son Cain, or "Gotten"; she looked upon him as God's gift and the promised seed, for



CAIN AND ABEL OFFERING SACRIFICES.

she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," or, as it may be translated, "I have gotten a man, even the Lord." Her second son she called "Abel," or "Vanity"; and the name implies "breath," something of short duration, as if in anticipation of his early death—that his days would be cut short.

In process of time Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God. Cain, the husbandman, brought of the fruit of the ground; Abel, the shepherd, brought a lamb of his flock, and "by faith offered he unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," and

so God had respect unto Abel and to his offering ; but unto Cain and to his offering He had no respect.

Then Cain was very wroth. He was angry with God, and angry with his brother for pleasing God. God's gentle words of reproof worked no repentance in his heart, and so his hatred increased until he rose up against his brother and slew him ; so true it is that he who hateth his brother is a murderer, although he raise no hand against him.

Abel's blood crying from the ground brought God's curse upon him, and he became a fugitive and a vagabond, or wanderer upon the earth. Sons were, however, born to him, and he became the parent of a race of men whose wickedness was so great that at last the whole world became corrupt and filled with violence. One godly family only could be found upon the earth. This was the family of Noah, and Noah was descended from Seth, the son born to Adam soon after the death of Abel.

Then God determined to destroy all mankind, save Noah and his family, by the waters of a great flood. He allowed them a season of grace, a space of one hundred and twenty years. During this time Noah, who had long been a preacher of righteousness, called them to repentance, but they heeded him not. Then, at last, God's wrath overtook them : all the foundations of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened, and it rained upon the earth forty days and forty nights ; and the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days until the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth and every man ; all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, all that was in the dry land died. Noah only remained alive and his family, his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their wives, and the animals and birds that Noah preserved as God had commanded him.

How were Noah and his household saved from the waters of the flood ?

God told him to make an ark of gopher wood, or some pitch-bearing wood, with rooms and places in which to keep the beasts and birds, two and two of every kind, that were to be saved. And when all was ready Noah and his family and the animals entered the ark and God shut them in. Then the storm burst at last upon the ungodly world, the rain poured down, while the seas and rivers overflowed their bounds, but the ark floated upon the waters. How awful must have been the sight to Noah and his sons, when looking from the ark they beheld nothing, as far as the eye could reach, but

one wide waste of waters in which all mankind except themselves had perished.

For one year and ten days Noah and his household and the many animals that were with him remained in the ark. At the end of that time "the ground was dry," and the earth was fit to be once more the abode of man and beast. Thus mankind were again placed on trial in the world, and they had seen God's judgment inflicted on the wicked and impenitent; but they were not in a state of innocence as Adam and Eve were at first. When our first parents fell from their holy state their



NOAH BUILT AN ALTAR AND WORSHIPPED GOD BY SACRIFICES.

hearts became corrupt; they had departed from their original righteousness, and all men descended from them had alike fallen natures, for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

Noah's first act after he left the ark was one of penitence and gratitude that he and his family had been spared while all the rest of mankind had been utterly destroyed off the face of the earth. Noah built an altar and worshipped God by sacrifices.

God accepted Noah's sacrifices. He smelled a sweet savour, the savour of Noah's faith and thanksgiving, and He blessed Noah and made a covenant with him. He promised that the

waters should no more become a flood to destroy all flesh; that although "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," He would not again curse the ground for man's sake; and He promised besides, "while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Henceforth the bow in the cloud—the bow of many colours that compasseth the heavens—the glorious bow bent by the hands of the Most High that seemeth to join heaven and earth, became a token of that covenant. Thus Noah's covenant was a covenant of peace and reconciliation with God and a type of the Baptismal covenant which places us in a state of salvation.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON IX.

*Question.* What were the names of the three sons of Adam and Eve spoken of in Scripture?

- Q.* Did Cain and Abel represent any particular classes of men?
- Q.* Is there anything particular to remember about Seth?
- Q.* Why did Eve call her first-born son Cain?
- Q.* What did she say when her son was born?
- Q.* What does Abel mean?
- Q.* Did Cain and Abel worship God?
- Q.* Did God accept their sacrifices?
- Q.* Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice and reject the sacrifice of Cain?
- Q.* Did God's dealings with Cain lead him to repentance?
- Q.* Did God spare Cain's life?
- Q.* What then was the state of the world?
- Q.* Were no godly men to be found?
- Q.* What did God determine to do?
- Q.* Did God spare Noah?
- Q.* Did God allow the wicked people time to repent?
- Q.* Did they believe God, and repent them of their sins?
- Q.* For how long a time did the waters of the flood prevail upon the earth?
- Q.* What was Noah's first act when he left the ark?
- Q.* Did God accept Noah's sacrifices?
- Q.* What became God's token of the covenant He made with Noah?
- Q.* What kind of a covenant was it?
- Q.* And what is it a type of?

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### LESSON X.

The Tower of Babel—Dispersion of mankind—First call of Abraham at Ur of the Chaldees—Second call of Abraham at Haran—Abraham leaves Haran for Canaan—Abraham at Sichem.

*Read Gen. xi. 1—9, xii. 1—6.*

THE ark had grounded on the mountains of Ararat in Armenia, and the country around was the first settlement of Noah's descendants; but as population increased they sought a new home, and descended its southern slopes into the fruitful plain

of Shinar or Babylonia, between the great rivers Tigris and Euphrates, where afterwards Nimrod, a grandson of Ham, a mighty hunter and a conqueror, founded the first great empire of the world.

God had told the sons of Noah and their descendants not only to be fruitful, but to replenish the earth and spread themselves over it; now, however, they not only refused to obey this command but determined to do all they could to hinder its accomplishment. They said, "Let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach to heaven; and let us make us a name, *lest we be scattered abroad* upon the face of the whole earth." And so in their pride and self-will they began to build, and "the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded." He understood their reasons, and took notice of their arrogance. It was necessary that their pride should be humbled, their designs hindered, and that some punishment should overtake them; and all this God in His wisdom brought about by confounding their language so that they could no longer understand one another, or work together. This naturally obliged them to divide into companies or nations, and to scatter themselves over the earth, and the city they had begun to build was from that time called Babel, or Babylon, which means confusion. So Babylon is used in Scripture as a name for rebellion and whatever is opposed to the will of God. The lesson to be learnt from this story is that God often causes the very sins of men to work out His purposes and their punishment.

Genesis x., xi. 9, contains the only true account of the way in which the world became peopled after the flood, by the descendants of the three sons of Noah.

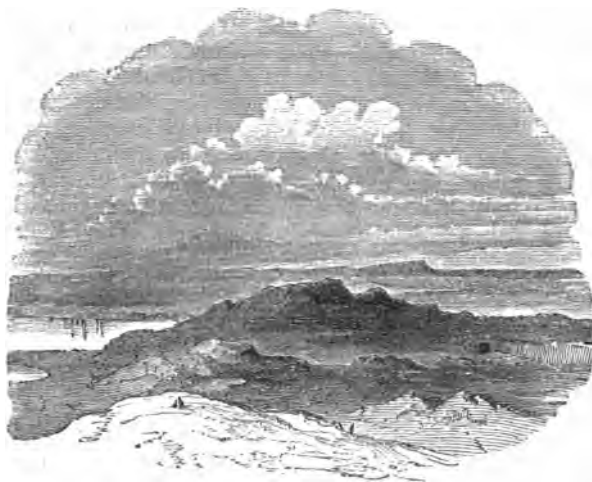
Within ten generations after the flood mankind generally had forsaken the worship of the One True God, and become idolaters; but God, remembering His covenant with Noah, did not destroy them.

Instead of doing this God chose one man who was faithful to Him, and a witness for Him, to be the father of a people whom He would separate from the other nations of the earth, to be holy to Him, to be His peculiar people, to be His witnesses in the world, to worship Him in a way of His own appointment, and whose great hope and expectation would be the Promised Seed, the Coming Deliverer, the Messiah, who would be born amongst them and spring from them.

The name of this father of the chosen nation was Abram (high or mighty Father), though God changed it afterwards to Abraham, which means the "father of a multitude." In th

midst of all the idolatry and forgetfulness of God which was now common, this one God-fearing man was living at Ur of the Chaldees, a town of Upper Mesopotamia, in the plain of Shinar, *between the rivers* Tigris and Euphrates, as the name (*Mesopotamia*) signifies. Abram was the youngest son probably of the three sons of Terah, the ninth patriarch in descent from Shem the son of Noah ; and he was born about 2,000 years before Christ. Terah probably worshipped idols, for idolatry was practised in the town in which he lived.

God's purpose was to separate Abram from the idolaters amongst whom he lived, and He commanded him to leave Ur of the Chaldees and go to the land of Canaan. Abram, obeying the Divine call, forsook his country and kindred, and



BABYLON.

went on his way along the valley of the Euphrates as far as Haran, or Charran, in Padan-Aram, in Lower Mesopotamia. Here perhaps out of consideration to his father, who had gone with him so far, but who may have refused to wander further away from his native place, Abraham dwelt until the death of Terah his father at the age of 205. After this event, as we believe, God called Abram a second time, and now he was not only to forsake his "country and kindred," but also his "father's house," and go to a land that God would show him, and God's promise was : "I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing." So in obedience

to God's command Abram departed, "not knowing whither he went," but trusting in God's guidance and submitting entirely to God's will. Nahor, Abram's elder brother, who had settled in Charran, remained there; but Lot (the son of Abram's brother Haran, who was dead) went with Abram and Sarai his wife.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON X.

*Question.* Where was the first settlement of Noah's descendants after the flood?

*Q.* What did they do when the country became too small for them?

*Q.* What command had God given to Noah and his sons?

*Q.* Did they obey this command?

*Q.* What is the meaning of the word Babel, or Babylon?

*Q.* What do we learn from this history?

*Q.* Does the book of Genesis tell us how the world was peopled by the descendants of Noah?

*Q.* What was the state of mankind within ten generations after the flood?

*Q.* Did God destroy mankind a second time?

*Q.* What was to be the hope and expectation of the Israelitish nation?

*Q.* What was the name of the man whom God chose to be the father of this holy nation?

*Q.* How did God deal with Abram?

*Q.* Did Abram obey God?

*Q.* Did Abram go direct to Canaan?

### LESSON XI.

Abram in the Land of Promise—Abram in Egypt—Abram and Lot return to Canaan—They separate—Lot pitched his tent towards Sodom, in the plain of the Jordan—Abram dwells at Mamre, near Hebron.

*Read Gen. xii. 10—20, xiii.*

IN calling Abram to leave his country and his father's house God seems to have had more than one purpose to serve. As God's chosen servant, the ancestor of the Promised Seed, and the father of the holy nation, Abram must be separated from the idolaters amongst whom he had been brought up, and trained to a life of faith and obedience. He must give himself up to God's guidance, believe His promises in spite of every discouragement, and obey God's commands even when he was called upon to sacrifice to Him what is dearer than life.

Abram crossed the great river Euphrates, and God led him over the Jordan into the Land of Promise—to Canaan; and as he journeyed he came to the beautiful valley of Sichem, lying between the mountains Ebal and Gerizim. Here he rested, and God appeared to him and said: "Unto thy seed will I give this land"; and to mark the spot as holy, Abram



builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. Again, in the country east of Bethel Abram builded likewise an altar unto the Lord; but soon a grievous famine obliged him to leave the Land of Promise and go down to Egypt, which was a very fertile country and grew much corn.

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, was very beautiful, and Abram feared that Pharaoh would wish to take Sarai to be his wife, and would kill him because he was Sarai's husband. So Abram told Sarai to say that she was his sister. Pharaoh was pleased with Sarai's beauty, and took her into his palace; but God plagued him with very great plagues because of Sarai, and made him understand that she was the wife of the stranger Abram. Then the king gave Sarai back to Abram in haste and with many presents (for he saw that Abram was a man of God and under God's special protection), but he reproved him for his deceit, saying: "What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife. Now, therefore, behold thy wife; take her, and go thy way."

So Abram and Lot returned to the Land of Promise richer than when they left it, and dwelt again in the country near Bethel. Here upon the same altar Abram offered sacrifices and called upon the name of the Lord. Abram and Lot were both prosperous, and their flocks and herds had so increased that after a little while "the land was not able to bear them that they might dwell together"—the pasturage began to fail, and then a strife arose about it between the herdmen of Abram and the herdmen of Lot. Abram cared only that there should be peace between them, for they were brethren; and so he told Lot to make his choice—to settle where he would: if Lot went to the left hand he would go to the right; or if Lot went to the right hand Abram would then go to the left. Lot chose the fertile plain of the Jordan, and pitched his tent towards Sodom; but however good the country was for feeding his flocks and herds it was an evil choice by reason of the wickedness of the people who dwelt therein; and the men of Sodom were sinners before the Lord exceedingly. Abram took the less fertile and more hilly country of Canaan. Thus Abram lost the companionship of Lot, but it was more than made up to him by the favour and blessing of God, and now at this time God repeated His promise that He would give the land to Abram's seed for ever. Then Abram removed his tent and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, near to Hebron.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON XI.

*Question.* What seems to have been God's purposes in calling Abram out of his country, and away from his kindred?

*Q.* What was Abram's first resting-place in the Land of Promise?

*Q.* What happened to Abram in Sichem?

*Q.* Where next did Abram pitch his tent, and build an altar to the Lord?

*Q.* What drove Abram to Egypt?

*Q.* What did Abram fear in going to Egypt?

*Q.* What did Abram do in consequence?

*Q.* What was the consequence of Abram's deceit?

*Q.* Did the king find out his mistake, and how did he act?

*Q.* Where did Abram go next?

*Q.* Did Abram and Lot long dwell together?

*Q.* Did Abram take the best of the land?

*Q.* What land did Lot choose?

*Q.* Was this a good choice?

*Q.* Why was this?

*Q.* Did anything happen to encourage Abram after Lot's departure?

## LESSON XII.

Battle of the kings—Lot taken prisoner—Abram pursues and smites the victorious kings—He rescues Lot—Melchizedek—God's promises to Abraham—God confirms His covenant by a visible sign—The smoking furnace and the burning lamp.

*Read Gen. xiv., xv.*

In the valley of the Jordan, where Lot dwelt, there were five cities—Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela—and they were governed by five chiefs or kings; but they all paid tribute to Chedorlaomer, King of Elam or Mesopotamia, who had conquered them in times past. After serving Chedorlaomer for thirteen years, these five kings rebelled against him and refused to pay him tribute. In a little while Chedorlaomer came with an army and three other kings, his allies, to punish the rebellious kings of Canaan, and he fought a battle with them in the vale of Siddim, and defeated them. He took much booty and many captives, and set out to return to his own country. One of these captives escaped and hastened to tell Abram what had happened, and how Lot was a prisoner and his wealth taken for a spoil. Then Abram armed his trained servants, and pursuing Chedorlaomer, rescued Lot and the other captives out of their hands, and recovered all the spoil that Chedorlaomer had taken with him. He might have enriched himself with the spoil, but he would not keep anything for himself, not even a shoe-latchet, and only claimed a reward for his friends, the three Amorite chiefs who had helped him. Abram had a better reward in rescuing Lot and helping

the kings in whose country Lot dwelt. Besides this, he was blessed by Melchizedek, King of Salem and a priest of the Most High God, who brought bread and wine to refresh him and his followers; but in this there was a hidden meaning, for Melchizedek was a type of Jesus Christ our High Priest, who has blessed and sanctified bread and wine to be the Communion of His Body and Blood.

With all this success Abram did not seem nearer the fulfilment of God's promise that his seed should inherit the land in which he dwelt, and that his seed should be as the dust of the earth for multitude, than he was ten years ago when he entered Canaan; and when God appeared again to him in a dream, saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward," Abram complained, "I go childless, and the steward of my house, this Eliezer of Damascus, is mine heir—Thou hast given me no seed." But God said, "This shall not be thine heir. Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; so shall thy seed be. And Abram believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness." Yet God granted Abram an outward sign to confirm his faith and to be a pledge of the covenant He had made with him. God told him to take animals for a sacrifice; and after dividing them in the midst he sat down beside them, and drove away the birds that would have devoured them until the going down of the sun. Then a deep sleep came upon Abram, and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him; and in the midst of the darkness he saw a smoking furnace and a burning lamp pass between the divided portions of the sacrifice. God also spoke to Abram, and told him that his seed would suffer affliction 400 years in a land that was not theirs, but He would bring them out with great substance into the Land of Promise, where Abram then was, and they should possess the land from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates. As for Abram, he should die in peace in a good old age. Thus God made sure His covenant with Abram. The smoking furnace and the burning lamp were a sign of the special presence of God. The darkness signified the coming affliction of His people and the time for His Church in the latter days. And so it often is with Abram's spiritual seed, the true members of Christ's Church. A time of darkness and trial generally comes before deliverance. They often wait long for the fulfilment of God's promises and have need of faith and patience to trust in God when He seems to have forsaken them; but if they wait still upon God and abide patiently for Him they will find that the Lord is good to those who seek Him and trust in Him.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON XII.

*Question.* What happened to Lot after he separated from Abram?

*Q.* What did Abram do when he heard that Lot had been taken prisoner?

*Q.* Who blessed Abram when he returned victorious?

*Q.* Who was Melchizedek a type of?

*Q.* Had any children been born to Abram and Sarai?

*Q.* Did God mean that Abram's steward should be Abram's heir?

*Q.* Did God grant Abram an outward sign to confirm His promise?

*Q.* What else did God say to Abram?

## LESSON XIII.

Sarai gives her maid Hagar to Abram—Sarai to have a son—Her name changed to Sarah—God will establish His covenant with Isaac.

*Read Gen. xvi., xvii. 1—21.*

God had promised Abram that he would make of him a great nation, and that his seed should be as numerous as the stars of heaven, but He did not say that Sarai would be the mother of this seed; and as years rolled and Sarai still remained childless, she seems to have despaired of ever becoming a mother, and so instead of waiting God's time and leaving Him to fulfil His promises and in the way He saw best, Sarai thought to bring them about by her own devices. It was the custom in Eastern countries for a wife who had no children to give one of her female servants or slaves to her husband to be his second wife, and her children were reckoned as the children of the first wife. So Sarai, when she lost all hope of having any children of her own, gave her Egyptian maid Hagar to Abram to be his second wife; but this scheme of Sarai's for fulfilling God's promises did not bring happiness to Abram's household. Hagar was lifted up and despised her mistress, and when Sarai behaved harshly to her she fled to the wilderness of Shur, and it is likely that she meant to return to Egypt, her native land; but the angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar in the wilderness and told her to return to her mistress Sarai and submit to her. And He comforted her, saying that she should bare Abram a son, and that her seed should be greatly multiplied.

Hagar returned to her mistress and submitted to her, and she bare Abram a son when he was eighty-six years old.

Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael God appeared once more to Abram, and changed his name to Abraham, "a father of many nations." He repeated His promises and confirmed His word by a new sign—the sign of circumcision. God declared that Sarai should have a son, and her name was no longer to be Sarai, but Sarah, or Princess. She was to be the

mother of the chosen people, and the Lord said, "I will bless her." Now when Abraham heard this he fell on his face and laughed, saying, "Shall a son be born unto him who is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah that is ninety bear children?" But Abraham loved his son Ishmael, and when God told him that Sarah should have a son he exclaimed, "O that Ishmael might live before Thee." But it was not God's purpose that Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman, should be the father of the chosen nation and the ancestor of the promised Messiah. So God repeated His promise, and said, "Sarah thy *wife* shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with *him* for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." Yet the Lord comforted Abraham concerning Ishmael: "As for Ishmael, I have heard thee," said God. "Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; but my *covenant* will I establish with *Isaac*, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XIII.

*Question.* Did Abram and Sarai wait patiently for the fulfilment of God's promises?

*Q.* Did God appear again to Abram?

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#### LESSON XIV.

Abraham and his three guests—Sarah to have a son—Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—Its allegorical meaning.

*Read Gen. xviii. and xix.*

SOON after, another very wonderful thing happened to Abraham while he dwelt in the plains of Mamre near Hebron. As he was sitting under the oak at the tent door in the heat of the day, he saw three strangers coming towards him, and he hastened to give them rest, and to make them welcome with kind words and willing service. One of these strangers was the Lord Himself. He had already promised Abraham that his wife Sarah should have a son; but as Sarah was "old and well stricken in age" she did not believe it possible, so the Lord repeated His promise and said to Abraham, "Sarah thy wife shall have a son"—in a year from the present time; for that is the meaning of the words "I will certainly return to thee according to the time of life." Sarah laughed with joy and wonder at the thought of so wonderful a thing, and as if to remove all doubt from her mind the angel said to her, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain where Lot dwelt had gone on filling up the measure of their iniquity. It was now full, and God was about to pour out His wrath upon them. Yet Abraham entreated the Lord to spare Sodom for the sake of the righteous who dwelt in it. Will God spare the city if fifty righteous be found in it? Yes, even ten righteous persons shall save Sodom from destruction. But amongst all the multitude of the ungodly Lot seems to have been the only God-fearing person, and he was vexed daily with the filthy conversation of the wicked. So Lot and his family were the only people saved from the doom of Sodom, for Lot's sons-in-law would not believe his words of warning. The angels brought Lot and his wife and his unmarried daughters out of the city, and told them to hasten to the mountains lest destruction should overtake them. Lot and his two daughters took refuge in the little town of Zoar, but his wife lingering behind, and not believing perhaps in the coming judgments, was overtaken by the sulphurous storm and perished.

The destruction of the cities of the plain and their inhabitants is an allegory—a kind of picture—of the world and its inhabitants, and of the separation of the righteous from the wicked at the day of judgment. “The plain is the world with all its wickedness, its snares, and its temptations. The mountain is heaven; and till we have escaped thither we are never safe.” If we linger and look back destruction may overtake us. Zoar, the city of refuge to which Lot fled, is a type of the Church of Christ.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XIV.

*Question.* What wonderful thing happened to Abraham while he dwelt in the plains of Mamre?

*Q.* What do we learn from the Bible history about one of the angels who visited Abraham?

*Q.* What are we told about Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain?

*Q.* When Abraham heard that the Lord was about to destroy Sodom what did he do?

*Q.* Did the Lord grant Abraham's prayer?

*Q.* Could ten righteous persons be found in Sodom?

*Q.* Is the destruction of the cities of the plain recorded for our instruction?

## LESSON XV.

Sarah has a son—Ishmael's jealousy—Hagar and Ishmael cast out—Great trial of Abraham's faith—Isaac's marriage—Sarah's death—Death of Abraham.

*Read Gen. xx.—xxv. 10.*

SOON after the destruction of the cities of the plain Abraham left Mamre, and going further south dwelt at Gerar, and afterwards at Beer-sheba, and here it was that Sarah bore Abraham a son in his old age, as God had promised. To celebrate the weaning of the child Abraham made a great feast, and there was much rejoicing; but there was one person who did not rejoice, and that was Ishmael. His conduct showed that he was jealous of the son of Sarah. He mocked at him, and when Sarah saw that Ishmael was likely to hate her son she told Abraham to send both Hagar and Ishmael away, for the son of the bondwoman should not be heir with her son Isaac, the child of promise. This was very grievous to Abraham, for we have seen that he loved his son Ishmael; but God said to him, "Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; and in all that Sarah said unto thee hearken unto her voice, *for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*" So Hagar and Ishmael were sent away from Abraham's tent, and it is likely that when Hagar set out upon her journey she intended to return to Egypt, her native land, but she lost her way in the wilderness of Beer-sheba; and when the water in her bottle was spent, and Ishmael was perishing with thirst, her courage failed her, and she "lifted up her voice and wept." Then, at last, God appeared for her help. He spoke to her and comforted her. He showed her a well of water, and promised her that Ishmael should be the father of a great nation. God was with him and prospered him. He became a skilful archer in the wilderness of Paran, near Mount Sinai, and the wandering Arabs of the present day boast of Ishmael being their father, just as the Jews still pride themselves on being the descendants of Abraham.

Isaac grew up as Abraham's well-beloved son, and he was not only the heir to Abraham's wealth but he was also the inheritor of all the glorious promises that God had made to the father of the faithful. From him was to spring the chosen nation, and he was to be the ancestor of the Holy One, the Messiah—the Seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head; yet when Isaac was about twenty-five years of age God commanded Abraham to sacrifice to Him this beloved son. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou

lovest, and get thee unto the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering." This was the greatest trial of Abraham's life, and the severest test of his faith. Shall he slay his beloved son, and if Isaac be slain how can God's promises be fulfilled? Abraham knows not, yet is sure that with God



ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

all things are possible. He can only obey God's command, and leave the rest to Him. And this he prepares to do without murmuring and without questioning. Abraham rises up early in the morning, and taking Isaac with him he begins his journey, and on the third day arrives within sight of the mount of



sacrifice. Then telling the servants to stay behind and wait for his return he takes the knife and the fire in his hand, lays the wood upon Isaac and walks on slowly and sadly to the place of trial. Isaac knows nothing of God's command, and he exclaims, "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" "My son," replies Abraham, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." At last the altar is built, and all is ready for the sacrifice. Isaac meekly submits to the will of God. He is bound and laid upon the altar, and Abraham stretches forth his hand to slay his son. His faith is proved, his obedience is complete, and he hears the voice of God calling to him, "Abraham, Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thine only son from Me." Instead of Isaac, a ram caught in a thicket is offered up as a burnt offering.

All this had a hidden and a spiritual meaning. It was a showing forth beforehand that God the Father would give His only begotten and well-beloved Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Abraham returned to Beer-sheba, the blessing of God resting upon him and upon the son whom God had so mercifully spared to him. Twelve more years of Abraham's life passed away, and then his wife Sarah died at their old home at Mamre, near Hebron, where Abraham was then living.

The next great event in Abraham's life was the marriage of Isaac. He, the heir of Abraham and the son of promise, must not take a wife from amongst the idolatrous Canaanites amongst whom he dwelt, so Abraham sent a faithful servant to Haran in Mesopotamia to get a wife for Isaac from amongst his own kindred.

At the well outside the town of Haran he halted to give his camels water, and here he offered up a humble prayer to the God of his master Abraham to prosper his mission for Abraham's sake, and by a sign to point out to him the damsel that was to be the wife of Isaac, and lo, before he had done speaking, Rebekah, the beautiful daughter of Bethuel, the son of Abraham's brother Nahor, came and filled her pitcher at the well, and in giving drink to him and to his camels she makes known to him that she was the very person whom he sought; and he saw that God had heard his prayer and made his journey successful. Then he gave Rebekah ornaments of gold, and she brought him to her father's house; and the next morning Rebekah was journeying with Abraham's servant towards Canaan. She had consented to be Isaac's wife, and both Bethuel her father and Laban her brother were willing that

she should go, seeing that "the thing proceeded from the Lord." And Isaac loved Rebekah and married her, and was comforted after his mother's death.

After this Abraham married a second time, and his wife's name was Keturah, and at last he was gathered to his fathers in a good old age, and his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the tomb of Machpelah, by the side of his best-beloved wife Sarah.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XV.

*Question.* After the visit of the angel, what was the next great event in the life of Abraham?

*Q.* What happened at the weaning of Isaac?

*Q.* What was the consequence?

*Q.* What became of Hagar and Ishmael?

*Q.* What promises did God make to her?

*Q.* What happened when Isaac was about 25 years of age?

*Q.* Did Abraham obey God?

*Q.* What was this trial of Abraham intended to teach us?

*Q.* What happened twelve years after this?

*Q.* Did Isaac marry one of the daughters of the idolatrous Canaanites amongst whom he dwelt?

### LESSON XVI.

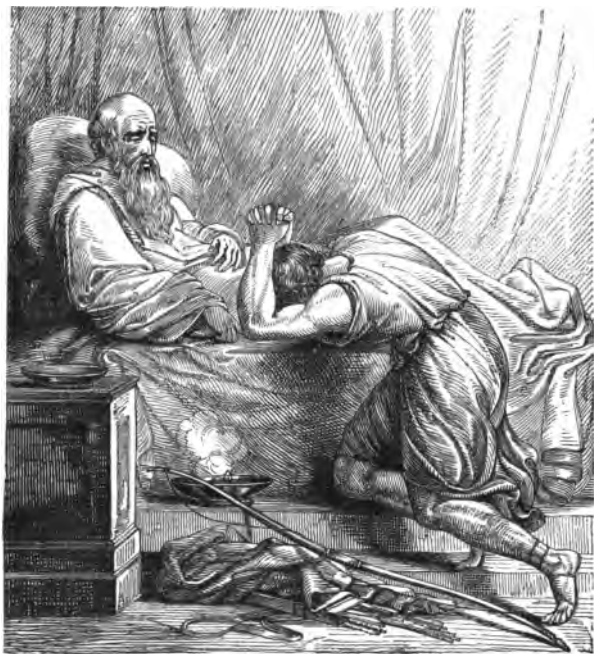
Birth of Esau and Jacob—Jacob and Esau—Jacob obtains the blessing  
—Punishment of Rebekah and Jacob.

*Read Gen. xxv. 19—34.*

TWENTY years after the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah their lives were gladdened by the birth of two twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau, the eldest, was thoughtless and good-natured. Jacob was less generous and more prone to deceit, but he inherited a share of Abraham's faith and Isaac's gentleness; and God, who knew what each would be, chose Jacob, even while the children were yet unborn, to take the rights of the first-born—to be Isaac's heir, and to inherit the promises that God had made to Abraham and to Isaac.

We next see Isaac an old man; his eyes were dim, and he felt that his life in this world would soon be over, but before he dies he must bless his eldest and favourite son, the bold hunter Esau. His bow shall get the venison for the savoury meat that Isaac loves. Isaac will eat of it and bless his son before he dies. Rebekah is alarmed. She loves Jacob more than Esau, and she believes that God has chosen Jacob to be the heir of Isaac and the inheritor of the promises. Yet she cannot trust God to bring all this about. She must scheme for it, and teach Jacob to be as untruthful and deceitful as herself,

and to use crooked ways to gain his end. While Esau is hunting Jacob must deceive his father and take to himself the blessing of the first-born, which meant not only temporal but spiritual benefits, the blessing that was intended for his brother. Two kids are slain, the skins of the kids are put on Jacob's neck and hands that he might seem indeed to be Esau (who was a hairy man) and the better deceive his father. Rebekah makes the savoury meat that Isaac loves, and Jacob hastens to take it to him. Isaac is puzzled ; "the voice," he says, "is the



ISAAC AND ESAU.

voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau" ; but when Jacob assures his father that he is indeed his "very son Esau" Isaac believes him and blesses him, making him his heir and lord over his brother. But, lo ! Isaac had scarcely made an end of blessing Jacob when the true Esau brings him his savoury meat and begs his blessing. But it is too late. Isaac has blessed Jacob, and, said Isaac, "he shall be blessed" ; and Esau, with "a great and exceeding bitter cry," laments the birthright that he had valued so lightly, and had so carelessly

sold to Jacob for a mess of pottage. Isaac is likewise to be pitied. His wife and son have both deceived him, and meanly taken advantage of his blindness, while his eldest and beloved son Esau is disinherited. Yet Isaac sees, we may believe, that God had permitted this. Jacob, perhaps, had previously followed his own will rather than God's will, yet by this very means God has brought about His own purposes, and Isaac "trembles exceedingly."

Both Rebekah and Jacob were speedily punished for their deceit. Jacob hastened to escape from the vengeance of Esau and became a lonely wanderer, and for many years he served a covetous and deceitful master. Rebekah was parted from her favourite son, and probably never saw him again. She had indeed procured Jacob his father's blessing, but her sin bore the bitter fruit of sorrow and remorse.

#### CATECHISM ON LESSON XVI.

*Question.* Had Isaac and Rebekah any children?

*Q.* Were Esau and Jacob alike in disposition and character?

*Q.* Which of these two sons of Isaac and Rebekah had God chosen to be the heir of Isaac and the inheritor of the promises?

*Q.* What happened when Isaac grew old, and his eyes were dim?

*Q.* Did Esau get his father's blessing?

*Q.* Why was the blessing of the first-born to be especially valued?

*Q.* How was he able to pass for Esau, for his skin was smooth, and Esau had a hairy skin?

*Q.* Was Esau sorry when he found that he had lost the blessing of the first-born?

*Q.* Did Rebekah and Jacob suffer for their falsehood and deceit?

#### LESSON XVII.

Jacob at Bethel—Jacob at Haran—He marries Leah and Rachel—Jacob's children—His wealth—Jacob's flight from Haran—Jacob and the angel—His name changed to Israel—Meeting of Esau and Jacob—Jacob pitched his tent at Shechem.

*Read Gen. xxviii.—xxxiii.*

Soon after Isaac had given Jacob his blessing, he charged him not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan, but to go to Padan-aram to the house of Bethuel, his mother's father, and take a wife from the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother. "And," said the venerable Isaac, "God Almighty bless thee and multiply thee, and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and to thy seed after thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham."

Thus blessed with "the blessing of Abraham," the heir of Isaac and the inheritor of the promises set out alone upon his journey to the distant Haran, in Mesopotamia. But though he had no human companion the God of his fathers was with him and comforted him; for as he slept, the mountain upon which he had been gazing, probably when he laid down to rest, became in his dream a glorious staircase or flight of steps, upon which the angels of God ascended and descended between earth and heaven. "And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east, and to the north and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land." And so at the very time when Jacob was flying from the Land of Promise, God assured him that He would bring him back to it, and that meanwhile He would be with him and keep him, and his seed should inherit the land of Canaan. The ladder that Jacob saw was a type of Jesus Christ, who is "the Way to the Father" and the "Door of Eternal Life."

When Jacob awoke out of his sleep he felt, indeed, that God was with him and was very near him. "Surely the Lord is in this place," he said, "and I knew it not . . . This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven." And Jacob called the place Bethel; and with the stones on which his head had rested he built a pillar or an altar to God, and for a remembrance of God's promises and of his own vows.

Laban was glad to see his sister's son, and Jacob agreed to serve him seven years for his daughter Rachel; but Laban acted deceitfully and gave him his elder daughter Leah instead of Rachel, and so God, we may believe, brought Jacob to a bitter remembrance of his own sin. Jacob served Laban yet another seven years for Rachel. Then Jacob served Laban for wages which the mean and covetous Laban changed many times for his own profit. Nevertheless God blessed Jacob, and he became rich in flocks and herds, and at last—unknown to Laban, for Laban would have hindered him—he set out with his wives and children and all that he possessed to return to his native land; and when Laban followed after Jacob, meaning to bring him back by force, God warned Laban not to threaten Jacob nor to seek to entice him back by fair words and liberal promises. Laban upbraided Jacob for having left secretly, but Jacob reminded Laban of his long and faithful

service of twenty years, and, said Jacob, "Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight." If Jacob had become rich it was not by Laban's help, but in spite of him. Ten times had Laban changed Jacob's wages for his own advantage, and even now it was the fear of God's anger that restrained him. So Laban made a covenant with Jacob, and they both agreed to dwell apart and to abstain from doing harm one to the other.



DEPARTURE OF JACOB WITH HIS FAMILY.

But soon a worse danger threatened Jacob. Esau dwelt in the land of Edom, and Jacob sent messengers to tell him of his return to Canaan, and they returned and told Jacob that his brother was coming towards him with 400 men. Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed, yet he put his trust in God's Almighty protection, and besought His help in a very humble and penitent prayer (Gen. xxxii. 9—12). He was not, he said, worthy of the least of all God's mercies, yet because of His own promises he prayed God to deliver him from the hand of Esau, "For I fear him, lest he will come and smite me and

the mother with the children." God had been his help in times past, and now in the hour of danger he besought God to have mercy upon him and save him. All that night Jacob wrestled with a man—an unknown stranger—till the break of day. This mysterious stranger was the "angel Jehovah." Jacob was allowed to overcome his antagonist; but the angel's touch put Jacob's hip out of joint, and so Jacob was made to feel his own weakness; but he obtained a blessing, and his name was changed from "Jacob," a supplanter, to "Israel," a prince of God.

Then Jacob (sending before him a goodly present for Esau) went boldly forward to meet his brother, feeling sure that God had heard his prayer and would protect him, and Esau "ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept." Esau returned to the mountainous country of Mount Seir, that became known as Edom, or Idumæa; and Jacob, after staying for a time at Succoth, passed over to the other side of the Jordan, pitched his tent in a field near the city of Shechem, which he bought for 100 lambs, and here he built an altar to El-elohe-Israel, the Mighty One, the God of Israel, or "God the Mighty Protector of Israel," in thankful remembrance of the deliverance that God had wrought for him in warding off the dangers that threatened him, and bringing him back in safety and prosperity to the Land of Promise.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XVII.

*Question.* Shortly after blessing Jacob, what did Isaac command him to do?

- Q.* What happened to Jacob on his way to Haran?
- Q.* What did this staircase represent?
- Q.* Did Jacob find a kind friend in his uncle Laban?
- Q.* How long did Jacob serve Laban?
- Q.* Did Jacob prosper?
- Q.* How at last did he leave Laban?
- Q.* What did Laban do when he heard of Jacob's flight?
- Q.* Was Jacob soon threatened with a greater danger than the anger of Laban?
- Q.* What did Jacob do?
- Q.* What happened to Jacob while he prayed to God?
- Q.* Who was it that wrestled with Jacob?
- Q.* Did Jacob receive any benefits from God at this time?

## LESSON XVIII.

Vengeance of Simeon and Levi—Jacob at Bethel—Death of Rachel—  
Death of Isaac—Isaac's character.

*Read Gen. xxxiv. and xxxv.*

JACOB had lived, probably, some ten or twelve years at Shechem when his sons Simeon and Levi treacherously slew Hamor (the chieftain of the people who dwelt in that part of Canaan) and his son Shechem, and killed all the men of the city with the sword, in revenge for an injury done by Shechem to their sister Dinah. Jacob, who was of a peaceable disposition, was greatly displeased at the crime, and he feared the vengeance of the people of the land. But God appeared for Jacob's help, and told him to go to Bethel, and there by building an altar to fulfil the vow that he had made when the Lord appeared to him as he fled from Esau. So Jacob journeyed to Bethel and built an altar there, and called the place El-beth-el, or the God of Bethel. And God confirmed to Jacob the covenant He had made with Abraham, saying, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation, and a company of nations, shall be of thee; and kings shall come out of thy loins: and the land which I gave to Abraham and to Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land;" and "the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob." At Bethel Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried under an oak-tree, which was afterwards called the Oak of Tears. Removing further south, at Ephrath, or Bethlehem, Jacob lost his beloved wife Rachel, but her little son Benjamin, the brother of Joseph, lived to be a comfort to Jacob in his old age. Leaving Bethlehem Jacob next fixed his abode at his old home beneath the oaks at Mamre, near Hebron, once the home of Abraham. The aged Isaac was still living at Mamre, and here he died at the age of 180. Esau and Jacob met once more beside the grave of their father Isaac, and buried him in the cave of Machpelah, the resting-place of Abraham and Sarah.

"The chief glory and beauty of Isaac's character is its gentleness. He never quarrels. Strife is hateful to him. There is not about him the grandeur of Abraham, nor the cleverness of Jacob. But in his submissiveness, in his love and veneration for his father, and his readiness to suffer wrong, he is not an unworthy type of the great Promised Seed, who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. In Isaac the idea of sacrifice advanced a clear



step forward. The Promised Seed must be a sacrifice ; and as Isaac willingly submitted to be bound, so must the Seed willingly offer Himself as a sacrifice for the whole world."

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XVIII.

*Question.* What caused Jacob to leave Shechem ?

*Q.* Who was Hamor ?

*Q.* Why did Simeon and Levi kill these people ?

*Q.* Was Jacob displeased at his sons' conduct ?

*Q.* What evil consequences did he fear ?

*Q.* To what place did Jacob go ?

*Q.* Where next did Jacob dwell ?

*Q.* What calamity happened to Jacob during his stay at Bethlehem ?

*Q.* Did Jacob remain always at Bethlehem ?

*Q.* What happened after his return to Mamre ?

*Q.* Where was Isaac buried ?

*Q.* What were the chief qualities of Isaac's character ?

*Q.* Of whom was Isaac a type ?

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### LESSON XIX.

Joseph and his brethren—They sell Joseph to Ishmaelite merchants—  
Joseph in Egypt—Joseph ruler over the land of Egypt.

*Read Gen. xxxvii.—xlii.*

WE have seen that Jacob when at Shechem suffered from the violence and passion of his sons Simeon and Levi, and all his sons who had grown up to manhood were cruel, turbulent, and self-willed. They neither loved nor feared God, they were undutiful to their father Jacob, and unkind to their younger brother Joseph. Joseph, the elder son of Rachel, was altogether different, for he was gentle and loving, dutiful to his father, and always ready to do a good turn to his elder brothers, although they persecuted him and would not speak peaceably to him. Their father's love for him made them envious ; and when Joseph told them of his dreams, which seemed to show that he would come to great honour, and that his brethren would bow down to him, they hated him all the more and were the more envious. When men give way to envy and hatred they generally go from bad to worse, and not seldom become liars and murderers if they see an opportunity of gratifying their evil passions. And so it was with Joseph's brethren ; they often wandered far from home seeking pasture for their sheep, and once when they were keeping their sheep near Shechem, and had perhaps been absent longer than usual, Jacob told Joseph to go and seek his brethren and to inquire into their welfare. But when they saw Joseph coming towards them wearing a coat of many colours that Jacob had made for

him, all their envy and hatred rose to such a pitch that they exclaimed, "Behold this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams." But the wicked when fighting against God are often only instruments in His hand for the accomplishment of His purposes, and so it was with Joseph's brethren, for, as we shall see by-and-by, the very means they used for Joseph's humiliation, and, as they thought, to make the accomplishment of his dream impossible, were, in God's hands, the means of their fulfilment. Reuben saved his life by persuading his brethren not to shed his blood because he was their brother, but rather to put him into a pit, meaning to



JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

return secretly and deliver him; but in his absence his brothers sold Joseph to some Midianite or Ishmaelite merchants for twenty pieces of silver. Jacob had sent his beloved Joseph to ask after his sons' welfare, and this was their cruel return to their aged father. They dipped Joseph's coat in the blood of a kid, and showed it to Jacob, asking him whether that was indeed his son's coat? Jacob mourned for his son many days. He refused to be comforted. "I will," he said, "go down to the grave with my son mourning." It was twenty-two years before Jacob saw him again.

As for Joseph, what now appeared more unlikely than the fulfilment of his dreams! Sold as a slave in Egypt, accused by his master's wife of a great crime, and thrown into prison, he

seemed to have sunk down to as low a state as could possibly be ; but he became a striking instance of how speedily God can raise a man from a dungeon to sit with princes and to rule over his fellow-men. How all this came to pass we learn from the Scripture narrative.

Pharaoh, King of Egypt, dreamed some remarkable dreams, and God enabled Joseph to interpret them, and he counselled Pharaoh what to do to provide against the seven years of famine that were to follow the seven years of plenty. Then



JOSEPH SOLD TO THE ISHMAELITES.

Pharaoh, seeing that Joseph was wiser than any of his own people and that God was with him, chose him to manage the matter, and to carry out his own plans for the benefit of the country ; and that he might be able to do so, he gave him great power and authority, making him ruler over all the land of Egypt and next in rank to himself.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XIX.

*Question.* What was the character of Jacob's sons?  
*Q.* Which was Jacob's favourite son?

- Q. How did Joseph's brothers behave to him ?  
 Q. What was the consequence of their hatred ?  
 Q. How did Joseph's brothers deceive their father Jacob ?  
 Q. What became of Joseph in Egypt ?  
 Q. But why did Pharaoh make him ruler of the land ?

## LESSON XX.

Joseph's brethren in Egypt—Their second visit to Egypt with Benjamin—Joseph makes himself known to them—He sends for his father—Lessons that Joseph's history teaches.

*Read Gen. xlii.—xlv.*

THE seven years of famine followed the seven years of plenty, as Joseph had said they would, and then he opened the store-houses of grain that he had filled during the time of abundance



THE FINDING OF JOSEPH'S CUP IN BENJAMIN'S SACK.

and sold corn to the people. Then it was that his brethren came to Egypt to buy corn, and Joseph knew them though they knew not him, and he used means to find out whether they had repented of their cruelty, and whether they had any love for their father and for Joseph's younger brother Benjamin. He spoke roughly to them and called them spies, and said that they had come to spy out the land. But they answered, "We are true men ; thy servants are no spies,

but twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan ; and behold the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not." If they are true men let them prove their words ; let them send one of the brothers for Benjamin, and when he saw him he would believe them, and the others should be kept in prison until Benjamin was brought to Egypt. By-and-by he gave them leave to return with corn to Canaan, but Simeon was to be bound and kept prisoner in Egypt until they returned with their youngest brother. At last they got Jacob's consent, and took Benjamin with them to Egypt, Judah being surety for him ; and when Benjamin was accused of taking Joseph's cup, and it was found in Benjamin's sack, Judah pleaded earnestly for him. Yes, he would be Joseph's slave instead of Benjamin ; only let Benjamin go free, he entreated, seeing that his father's life was bound up in his life, and if he returned not to him it would "bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." It was enough. Joseph now knew that his brothers repented of their sin, and that Judah was willing to be himself a slave to save his brother, and to restore him to his aged father. Joseph could no longer conceal his feelings, nor restrain his tears, nor hide his love under a pretended severity. He made himself known to his brethren, and he sent them away with waggons and asses laden with the good things of Egypt to bring back his father and their wives and their little ones to settle in the land where he was so powerful ; he would feed them during the years of famine. They were to tell their father of all Joseph's glory in Egypt, and to hasten and bring him down to Egypt.

We learn from this history of Joseph's calamities and wonderful rise to power that nothing can hinder the fulfilment of God's promises ; that though often long delayed they are sure, and also that great trouble may precede their glorious accomplishment.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XX.

- Question.* Did Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams come true ?  
*Q.* What did Joseph do when the years of scarcity began ?  
*Q.* Who came to Egypt to buy corn ?  
*Q.* Did Joseph know his brethren ?  
*Q.* How did he behave to them ?  
*Q.* Why did he behave roughly to them ?  
*Q.* How did Joseph's brethren answer him ?  
*Q.* Did their answer satisfy Joseph ?  
*Q.* Did one of the brothers remain in Egypt ?  
*Q.* Did the others return to Egypt with Benjamin ?  
*Q.* How did they get Jacob's consent to this ?  
*Q.* What happened upon the return of the brothers to Egypt with Benjamin ?

- Q. Did they consent to leave Benjamin in Egypt?  
 Q. What effect did his brothers' behaviour have upon Joseph?  
 Q. Did he still treat his brothers as strangers?  
 Q. What lesson do we learn from the history of Joseph?

## LESSON XXI.

Jacob goes to Egypt—The Israelites at Goshen—Jacob dies in Egypt—He is taken to Canaan for burial—Death of Joseph—Character of Joseph.

*Read Gen. xlv. — 1.*

THE history that the Bible unfolds to us is now no longer the history of some one man from whom the Promised Seed should



JACOB MEETING JOSEPH.

spring, but it is the history, first of a chosen family, and then of a nation descended from this family; and in this nation the hope and expectation of the Promised Seed was to be specially kept in remembrance by a religion which should in everything point to the Messiah and keep His coming continually in view.

When Jacob heard the wonderful news brought to him by his sons, that the great lord who ruled the land of Egypt was no other than his long lost son Joseph, his heart fainted, for he believed them not. But when he heard Joseph's message, and saw proof of its truth in the things sent by Joseph in such

abundance, his spirit revived. Faith and hope, and a remembrance of God's promises and of Joseph's dreams came back to him, and he exclaimed, "It is enough, I am now sure that what you tell me is true. Joseph my son is yet alive, and I will go and see him before I die." At Beersheba, Israel offered sacrifices to God, and God spoke unto Israel in a vision, and said, "I am God, the God of thy father; fear not to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again." Thus encouraged, he went on with a good heart to Egypt, and all his seed with him. When Joseph heard that his father had reached the borders of the country, he hastened in his chariot to meet him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while, and Israel said, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." Pharaoh received Joseph's kindred with great favour, and gave them the fertile land of Goshen to dwell in, and they had great possessions there, and multiplied exceedingly. Seventeen years afterwards, Jacob was gathered to his fathers at the age of 147 years. The blessings and prophecies of Jacob on his deathbed made his twelve sons the twelve heads of the chosen nation (Gen. xlix.), and when these were ended he charged his sons to bury him with his fathers in the land of Canaan. In obedience to this command, Joseph and his brothers went with a great company of Egyptians and Israelites, and many chariots and horsemen, to Canaan, and buried Jacob in the cave of Machpelah, near to Hebron. Joseph lived after the death of Jacob fifty-four years, and died at the age of 110 years. Before his death he made the children of Israel promise solemnly that when God visited them to bring them out of Egypt into the Land of Promise, that they would carry his bones with them. So Joseph's body was embalmed and preserved in a coffin; but it was never buried in Egypt; and after a long time it was taken by the Israelites to Canaan and buried there.

Not in all Scripture do we meet with a more upright, conscientious, and God-fearing man than Joseph. He loved and served God in adversity and in prosperity; he always remembered that he was God's servant, and that he must do everything for God's honour and glory.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXI.

*Question.* What change takes place in the Bible narrative from the time of Israel and his seed going down to Egypt?

*Q.* What was the chosen nation especially to keep in remembrance?

*Q.* How was this to be done?

*Q.* What did Jacob say when he heard that the great lord; the ruler of Egypt, was his own long-lost Joseph?

- Q. Was he encouraged to go down to Egypt?  
 Q. In what part of Egypt did the Israelites settle?  
 Q. How long did Jacob live after going to Egypt?  
 Q. How old was he when he died?  
 Q. What did he do just before he died?  
 Q. What did he charge his sons to do?—A. To bury him in the land of Canaan.  
 Q. How long did Joseph live after Jacob's death, and how old was he when he died?  
 Q. What was the character of Joseph?

## LESSON XXII.

The king who knew not Joseph—Bondage and persecution of the Israelites—Moses saved by Pharaoh's daughter—He avenges his countryman—Flies to Midian—God appears to Moses—Moses returns to Egypt—The Israelites accept him as a deliverer.

*Read Ex. i.—iv.*

FOR some time after the death of Joseph, the descendants of Israel—or, as they were now called, the children of Israel—prospered, and continued to be a favoured people; but about 135 years after they had settled in Egypt their prosperity came to an end. A new dynasty, or line of kings (as it is supposed) reigned in Egypt, and a king ruled the country who knew not Joseph, and forgot the benefits of his wise government. The Hebrews, or Israelites, had become very numerous and powerful, and the King of Egypt feared lest they should join his enemies and conquer the country. So he made slaves of them and put taskmasters over them, and made their life bitter with hard bondage; but when he found that the more he persecuted them the more they multiplied, he made a decree that all their male infants should be thrown into the Nile, the great river of Egypt.

But Pharaoh's cruelty was overruled by God for His purposes. His persecution of the Israelites made them wish to leave Egypt, and willing to endure hardships and face danger to escape from it. In their distress they cried to God for deliverance, and the king's merciless decree about the male infants caused one of these infants to be brought up in a way that fitted him to be, in God's hands, the leader and deliverer of His people. This deliverer was Moses. His mother hid him three months, and at last, when she could no longer conceal him, she put him into a little boat, or water-tight cradle, made of bulrushes,\* and setting his sister to watch it, left him floating in it upon the river Nile. In this way she trusted her

\* More properly, stalks of the papyrus.



little boy to God's mercy, and God took care of him. The daughter of Pharaoh saw the little ark amongst the reeds at the river's side, and when she opened it and beheld a beautiful babe weeping for its accustomed nurse, she pitied and determined to save it, and to bring it up as her own son. The sister, who was watching, speedily obeyed the command of the princess to call a nurse, and fetched the child's own mother. So Moses was brought up as an Egyptian prince; but when he grew up he chose rather to suffer affliction with his own people than be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. At last his love for his countrymen made him kill an Egyptian taskmaster, who was cruelly ill-using an Israelite; but the Israelite did not keep this



HIDING MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES.

act of vengeance a secret, nor would the Israelites accept Moses as their deliverer, for when he would have made peace between two of them who strove together, the one who was in the wrong said to him, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" Moses' life was no longer safe in Egypt, for it was now plain that the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter was still an Israelite in heart, and ready to take the part of his people; and when what Moses had done became known to Pharaoh, he sought to slay him. So Moses fled to Midian, in the peninsula of Sinai, or the Eastern Gulf of the Red Sea. Here Moses dwelt forty years, and married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro,

the chief priest of Midian. It was a time of preparation for the great work that God had in store for him. Meanwhile the Israelites were still groaning under the cruel bondage of Pharaoh and the Egyptian taskmasters, and crying to God for deliverance ; and when God's time had fully come for bringing them out of Egypt, He spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, and said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters ; for I know their sorrows ; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . Come now, therefore, I will send thee



THE FINDING OF MOSES.

unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." Moses shrank from so great a task, but God said, "I will be with thee. I, Jehovah, I AM THAT I AM ; and thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. I AM the only true God, who is, and was, and is to come." And that the Israelites might believe that Moses was indeed sent by God, God gave him the power to do certain wonders. The rod in his hand was changed into a serpent, and back again into a rod at his command ; and his hand became leprous or sound as he put it into his bosom, or drew it out again ; but if these two signs did not convince his people he might take of the water of the Nile and pour it out

upon the dry land, and it should become blood. And when Moses complained that his speech was slow and hesitating, God promised to be with his mouth, and Aaron, his brother, should be his spokesman, speaking the words that Moses should put in his mouth. So Moses set out for Egypt, and meeting Aaron on the way, the two brothers went on to the land of Goshen. Then, calling together the elders of the children of Israel, Aaron told them all that the Lord had said to Moses, as Moses instructed him, and Moses did the signs in the sight of the people; "And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped."

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXII.

*Question.* Did the Israelites continue to be prosperous after the death of Joseph?

*Q.* Did a change then come over their fortunes?

*Q.* How was the condition of the Israelites altered?

*Q.* Did their altered condition reduce their numbers?

*Q.* What was the consequence of their continued increase?

*Q.* Did all this oppression and cruelty defeat God's purposes regarding the Israelites?

*Q.* What was the effect of the king's decree for destroying the Hebrew male children?

*Q.* When Moses grew up did he care for his own people?

*Q.* Did he continue to live in Egypt?

*Q.* What happened to him there?

*Q.* Did Moses return to Egypt?

*Q.* Did the Israelites believe Moses, and were they willing to obey him?

### LESSON XXIII.

Moses and Pharaoh—The ten Plagues—Feast of the Passover—Its typical meaning—The Israelites go forth out of Egypt—The Israelites in the Wilderness.

MOSES had now to deliver his message to Pharaoh. He did not go to Pharaoh in his own name, nor to speak his own words, nor yet the words of the children of Israel; but he went as one sent by the Lord to make known to him the commands of the God of Israel. But the king answered haughtily, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?" and far from obeying the voice of the Lord to let His people go, Pharaoh made their bondage the more severe. So to humble Pharaoh, and to make him know the power of the God whom he despised, God's judgments were poured out on king and people, and plague after plague came upon them. Their sacred river—

the Nile—was turned into blood ; reptiles and loathsome insects swarmed in their dwellings ; flies swarmed in the air and filled the houses ; their cattle were smitten with a grievous murrain ; boils broke out upon their own bodies ; their crops were destroyed by a terrible storm of hail, thunder, and fire ; and a plague of locusts ate up every green thing, and by their vast numbers nearly shut out the light of the sun. Then for three days there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt, but the Israelites had light in their dwellings. When each plague as it came was at its height Pharaoh repented, and promised to let Israel go ; but as soon as it was removed he hardened his heart and refused to fulfil his promise. Nine plagues had now afflicted the land, but one more plague, more terrible than any of the others, must yet be suffered, and “afterwards,” said the Lord, “Pharaoh will let you go hence.” This tenth plague was the death of the first-born. Moses warned Pharaoh, before he went out from his presence, what would be the consequence of his continued refusal to obey the commands of the God of Israel. For the last time he said to him, “Thus saith the Lord,” and then followed the awful message : “About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill ; and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more ;” but notwithstanding Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

Meanwhile, during this night of God’s wrath and judgments upon His enemies, His people, the Israelites, were to celebrate their first feast of the Passover, as the Lord commanded them. Every family was to slay a lamb without blemish. Its blood was to be sprinkled upon the lintel and two side posts of the door of the house, and then the lamb was to be roasted whole and eaten in haste. And to keep this solemn night, in which God delivered His people but slew the first-born sons of the Egyptians, God commanded them to repeat this Feast of the Passover once every year. So once every year the whole nation of the Israelites were reminded of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, and how God led them forth from Egypt with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm. But this Feast of the Passover had besides a spiritual and a typical meaning. The sacrifice of the lamb was a picture of that great sacrifice for the sins of men that was to be offered upon the cross by our Lord Jesus Christ, by which we are delivered from the bondage of sin ; and the feast that followed the sacrifice of the

lamb was a picture of the Christian Passover—the Lord's Supper—in which Christians feed spiritually upon the Body and Blood of the Lamb of God.

And now the time had come for God to deliver the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, and He led them out by the hand of Moses. The Lord had smitten all the first-born in the land of Egypt from the first-born of Pharaoh to the first-born of the captive in the dungeon. "And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians, and there



THE ISRAELITES MARCHING OUT OF EGYPT.

was a great cry in Egypt ; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel ; and go serve the Lord, as ye have said." And the Egyptians were likewise eager for the Israelites to go, for they said, "We be all dead men." Their first-born were already slain, and if the departure of the Israelites was still delayed, they knew not with what sorer judgments God might smite them. So the Israelites marched forth out of Egypt, a great army of 600,000 men who could bear arms,

besides a multitude of women and children and followers, numbering probably 2,500,000 souls, and their real leader was Almighty God, for Moses was but an instrument in His hands. By the shortest way, along the shores of the Red Sea, they might have reached Canaan in a few days, but besides the danger of attack from the warlike Philistines, they needed to be trained and disciplined into a nation, and educated by God to be His people. In the wilderness of the Red Sea God designed to make Himself known to them, and to instruct them by Moses how they were to worship Him.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXIII.

*Question.* What did Moses do as soon as the Israelites had acknowledged him as a deliverer sent by God?

*Q.* Did the king obey God's commands?

*Q.* What means did God use to humble Pharaoh, and to make him know the power of the God whom he despised?

*Q.* Mention these briefly?

*Q.* What effect did these plagues have upon Pharaoh?

*Q.* What was the last and most terrible plague?

*Q.* What was the consequence of this?

*Q.* Did the Israelites leave Egypt immediately?

*Q.* Who was their visible leader and captain?

*Q.* But who was their real leader?

*Q.* Did God lead them at once, and by the shortest road, to Canaan?

*Q.* How did the Israelites pass their last night in Egypt?

*Q.* Was this feast of the Passover ever to be repeated?

*Q.* Why was it to be repeated?

*Q.* Had this feast, besides, a spiritual and typical meaning?

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### LESSON XXIV.

The first day's journey—The Shechinah cloud—Pharaoh pursues after the Israelites—Passage of the Red Sea—Destruction of the Egyptians—The Israelites' song of thanksgiving—Spiritual or typical meaning of the passage of the Red Sea.

*Read Ex. xiv., xv. 1—21.*

THE first day's journey of the Israelites brought them to Succoth, and the next day they came to Ethan, on the edge of the wilderness; and from this time the Lord went before them—by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light. So God Himself directed their march, for the Shechinah cloud was the symbol of His presence, and He told Moses that the children of Israel must turn and encamp by the sea, before Pi-hahiroth, over against Baal-Zephon, and near the place where now stands the town of Suez. Meanwhile Pharaoh repented that he had let the Israelites leave Egypt, and instead of three days' journey into the wilderness to

sacrifice to the Lord, he saw that their intention was to escape altogether from Egypt and its slavery.

So he made haste and pursued after them with 600 chariots, and his horsemen, and his army, and in a short time he overtook them. There seemed to be no escape for the Israelites, and they were sore afraid. The sea and the mountains and the Egyptian army barred their way on every side. They forgot that the Lord was their Captain and Leader, and that He was stronger than Pharaoh and all his host; and they murmured against Moses, declaring that it would have been better to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. But Moses said to them, "Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will show you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." Then the pillar of the cloud that went before the camp of Israel removed and went behind them: to the Egyptians it was a cloud of darkness, and signified the wrath of God; but to the Israelites it was a light all night, and was a sign of God's favour. And while the Israelites thought only of flying back to Egypt for safety and becoming the slaves of Pharaoh, Moses' watchword to them was "Forward."

Are they then to perish in the sea rather than fall into the hands of the King of Egypt? No, while they looked at the waves with fear and dread and doubt, wondering at the strange command, Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and a strong east wind drove back the sea, and made dry land of the ocean bed, and a highway for the terrified Israelites. Moses had no need to repeat his command, for the people hurried "forward" and onward, and made all speed to reach the opposite shore. But the danger was not over. The pathway of dry land across which the thousands of Israel fled for life and liberty was also a road by which the Egyptians were able to follow after them; and so, we are told, "the Egyptians pursued and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen." But the Lord fought against them and troubled them, so that they exclaimed, "Let us flee from the face of Israel"; but it was too late, for Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned in its strength; the wind fell and the tide turned, so that the water rushed back to its accustomed bed and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh; there remained not so much as one of them.

"Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and they saw their dreaded foes dead upon the sea-shore; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses;" and in their joy, and wonder,

and thankfulness, they sang a joyous and beautiful hymn of thanksgiving and triumph. The men said—

"Jehovah is a man of war,  
Jehovah is His name ;"

and the women, headed by Miriam, answered them—

"Sing ye to Jehovah, for He hath triumphed gloriously,  
The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea."

This passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites separated them from the slavery of Egypt, and raised them to a new life—their life as a nation, of which God Himself was the King—and spiritually it shadowed forth the mystical washing away of sin in Holy Baptism.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXIV.

*Question.* What did Pharaoh do when he found that the Israelites had really departed out of Egypt ?

*Q.* Did he overtake them ?

*Q.* Were the Israelites frightened ?

*Q.* What did Moses say to them ?

*Q.* What sign did God give them to encourage them ?

*Q.* What watchword did Moses give the Israelites ?

*Q.* How did God prepare a way for them ?

*Q.* Did the Egyptians follow them ?

*Q.* Did the Israelites rejoice at the destruction of the Egyptians ?

*Q.* Is this passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites believed to have a typical meaning ?

#### LESSON XXV.

The Israelites journey towards Mount Sinai—The well of Marah—Failure of provisions—Murmuring of the Israelites—Miraculous supply of manna and of flesh—Manna a type of the true Bread from heaven—Murmuring at Rephidim—Water from the rock—Victory over the Amalekites—Moses appoints rulers.

*Read Ex. xvi., xvii., xviii.*

THE Israelites had nothing more to fear from the Egyptians, and they now began their wanderings in the wilderness of Shur, or Ethan ; but their Almighty Leader did not conduct them towards Canaan, but southward in the direction of Mount Sinai. For three days they found no water, and when at last they came to the well or spring of Marah, they found the water so bitter that they could not drink of it. Then the Israelites murmured against Moses, as was their wont whenever they got into difficulties. Moses did not answer in angry words, but by prayer sought counsel and help of God. God told him to cast a certain tree into the well, and



the water was made sweet and fit for use. Their next march brought the Israelites to Elim, where they encamped under the shadow of seventy palm-trees and by the side of twelve wells of water. After rest and refreshment they continued their journey through the wilderness of Sin towards Mount Sinai ; but no sooner did the provisions they had brought with them begin to fail, than their slavish nature and their want of faith in their Almighty Deliverer, as well as in His servant Moses, were again manifested. They were willing to return to the slavery of Egypt if only they might eat bread and meat to the full. They believed not in God, and put not their trust in His help. God heard their murmurings, and His glory appeared in the cloud, and He commanded Moses to speak to the



MOSES STRIKING THE ROCK.

children of Israel, saying, "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread ; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God." Quails in the evening and manna in the morning soon supplied the people with abundance of food, and during their forty years' wandering in the wilderness the miraculous supply of manna never failed. "God commanded the clouds above, and opened the doors of heaven. He rained down manna also upon them for to eat, and gave them food from heaven. So men did eat angels' food ; for He sent them meat enough. He rained flesh upon them as thick as dust, and feathered fowls as the sand of the sea." But this

manna was not the true Bread from heaven : it was only a type of it ; for our Lord Jesus Christ tells us that the Bread of God is the Bread which cometh down from Heaven and giveth life to the world ; and He says, "I am the Bread of Life." Besides being a type of the true Bread, the spiritual food of God's people, the manna was a proof of God's love and care for His people, and likewise a trial of their obedience, a test whether they would keep holy the Sabbath-day, as the Lord commanded them.

At their next resting-place—Rephidim—there was no water, and again the people burst out in murmurs against Moses, and were almost ready to stone him. "Wherefore is this," they said, "that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us, and our children, and our cattle, with thirst?" Then in answer to his cry, God commanded Moses to smite the rock hard by, and water gushed out of it, so that the people had an abundant supply. And this rock was a type of our Lord, who was again smitten for us, and who is now for us a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. At Rephidim, likewise, the Lord delivered the Israelites from another danger by giving them victory over the Amalekites, a fierce, warlike tribe of the desert. Here it was, too, that Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, came to visit him, bringing with him Moses' wife, Zipporah, and his two sons ; and when Jethro heard all that the Lord had done, he said, "Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered you out of the hands of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods." And he offered sacrifices to God, and a sacrificial feast was held in honour of the God of Israel. Hitherto Moses had been not only the interpreter of the will of God to the people of Israel, and their leader under God, but also their judge in worldly matters ; but now, by the advice of his father-in-law, he chose honest and upright men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens, in common and daily matters. And this answered a double purpose. It left Moses more time for waiting upon God and learning His will, and the people would not have to wait so long for the settlement of their disputes.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXV.

*Question.* After the passage of the Red Sea, in what direction did God lead the Israelites?

*Q.* Did they meet with any hardships?

*Q.* How did they take them?

*Q.* What did Moses do?

*Q.* Where did the Israelites encamp next?

*Q.* In what way did they show their slavish nature and their want of faith in God ?

*Q.* Did God hear their complaints ?

*Q.* How did He supply their wants ?

*Q.* Was this manna the true Bread from heaven ?

*Q.* What happened at Rephidim, their next resting-place ?

*Q.* Who came to Moses at this time ?

*Q.* What did Jethro advise Moses to do ?

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## LESSON XXVI.

The Israelites encamp at Sinai—Moses on Mount Sinai—Tokens of God's wrath against sin—God's covenant with Israel—Seventy of the elders of Israel behold the glory of the Lord.

*Read Ex. xix., xxiv.*

THEIR next journey brought the children of Israel to the desert of Sinai, and they encamped upon a plain at the foot of the mount on the fifteenth day of the third month after their departure from Egypt. Before them Mount Sinai rose to the sky in lonely grandeur. God had already done great things for His chosen people ; but now He would make a covenant with them, and manifest Himself to them in signs and wonders that more plainly showed His power and glory than any they had already witnessed. God spoke to them by Moses, and told them that if they would obey His voice and keep His covenant, they should be His peculiar treasure above all people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. And the people answered as one man, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Then God commanded Moses to sanctify the people. They were to wash their clothes and purify themselves outwardly as a sign of that inward purity and holiness, that preparation of the heart, without which they could not really draw near to God in an acceptable manner. On the third day the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, and He called Moses up to Him to the top of the mount. But the people might not touch the mount, nor pass the boundary that had been placed around it, on pain of death. And Mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. It was with these mighty thunders and lightnings—the tokens of God's wrath against sin—that the first covenant was made with man, and the voice of God made known to them the law of the Ten Commandments. And this covenant was made with the Israelites whilst they beheld the terrors of the Lord ; but the new covenant that God afterwards promised was to be a covenant of pardon and peace for all people.

And when the people "saw the thunders, and the

lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they removed, and stood afar off; and they said to Moses, Speak thou with us, but let not God speak with us lest we die." So the people stood afar off, and Moses only went into the thick darkness where God was (xx. 18—21). Then, during six days, God spake to Moses, and gave him laws or statutes which the people were to observe in their daily life (xxi.—xxiii.). And Moses told the people all the words of the Lord, and they answered with one voice, and said, "All the



THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL BEFORE MOUNT SINAI.

words which the Lord hath said will we do." Then Moses wrote these statutes in a book, which he called the Book of the Covenant, and read it to the people. After this he built an altar and offered sacrifices to the Lord, and he sprinkled the blood of the sacrifices on the altar and on the people, saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you" (xxiv. 7, 8). The new covenant, of which this was a type or shadow, was ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ.

In dealing with the Israelites the Lord saw that it was necessary to mingle warnings with His promises. The Angel

of His Presence would keep them in the way, and bring them to the place prepared for them, but they must beware not to provoke Him by their transgressions.

Aaron and his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel were now permitted to go up with Moses into the mount and to behold the God of Israel. In His awful presence they ate what remained unconsumed of the peace-offerings, after which they returned to the camp. Moses was then to go and meet the Lord : Joshua his minister went with him, but only a part of the way. Moses alone went up into the mount, and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the sight of the children of Israel. And Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXVI.

*Question.* Where did the Israelites next encamp ?

*Q.* What did God now deign to do ?

*Q.* What did God say to His people by Moses ?

*Q.* What was the answer of the people ?

*Q.* How were the people to prepare themselves to meet the Lord ?

*Q.* What was this a type of ?

*Q.* What happened on the third day ?

*Q.* What did the people say when they beheld the tokens of God's presence and heard the voice of the Lord ?

*Q.* Did God's revelation begin and end with the Ten Commandments ?

*Q.* What did the people say when Moses told them what God had further said to him ?

*Q.* What did Moses do to keep these precepts of the Lord in remembrance ?

*Q.* How was the covenant between God and the children of Israel ratified ?

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#### LESSON XXVII.

Worship of the golden calf—God's wrath—Moses intercedes for the Israelites—Punishment of the impenitent.

*Read Ex. xxxii.*

DURING the forty days and forty nights that Moses passed in the mount, God instructed him how to make a tabernacle—a large tent that should serve as a temple—and how to worship Him acceptably by sacrifices. In this way God would point onwards to the coming of the Promised Seed, the Messiah, who in the fulness of time would take flesh and offer the one perfect sacrifice and atonement for the sins of men, and in this way He would teach the Israelites, as by pictures, the mysteries of redemption. These mysteries would, at least, be dimly shadowed forth by outward observances, and we may believe

that those who wished to know the things of God would by these means learn much about God's holiness and purity and their own sinfulness. By the sacrifices of the Jewish law they would be taught that something more than mere repentance was necessary to take away sin—that without shedding of blood there was no forgiveness of sins.

God gave Moses likewise two tables of stone on which He had written the law of the Ten Commandments, and He instructed Moses in many other things for the good of His people Israel. But how were the Israelites employed at this very time? Were they waiting with faith and patience for the return of their great leader and law-giver Moses? No, they were doing quite the opposite of all this. As week after week passed away and Moses did not return to them they despaired of ever seeing him again. Were they never to go forward? and who should guide them through the wilderness? So in their impatience and their wilfulness they went to Aaron and said, "Up, make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." Aaron feared to refuse the people because they were angry and excited, so he did as they desired and made them a molten calf, and the people worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel." This calf was an image of the Egyptian god Apis, and the Israelites seem to have regarded it, not as a god in itself, but as a symbol of Jehovah, the God who had brought them up out of Egypt; but they sinned in making a visible likeness of the invisible God, which they had been expressly forbidden to do. Then God's wrath was kindled against the people, who had so quickly corrupted themselves and turned aside out of the way which God commanded them. And the Lord said to Moses, "Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." God was also very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him. Did Moses think only of his own greatness when he heard these words? Did he rejoice in God's offer to make of his seed a nation—a favoured people—to take the place of the stiff-necked Israelites? No, he sought to turn away God's wrath from His people, he interceded for them. Had not God brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand? Would not the Egyptians say that it was for mischief that He did bring them out? And Moses reminded the Lord of His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel: "To whom," said Moses, "Thou swearest by Thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land will I give unto your seed, and they shall

inherit it for ever." And God repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people. He forgave their sin. Thus did Moses become a mediator between God and His people and a type of the One Great Mediator Jesus Christ.

Moses went down from the mount, and when he saw the Israelites dancing before the idol, after the manner of the Egyptians, his holy anger was kindled against them, and he cast the tables out of his hand, and brake them beneath the mount; for had not the people already broken the laws which were written on them by the fingers of God? And he took the calf which they had made and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. But this was not enough. The impenitent—those who persisted in their grievous sin—must be utterly destroyed and cut off from the congregation. So Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me." An offer of pardon was thus made to all who would range themselves on the Lord's side (Ex. xxxiii. 19), but the Levites only obeyed the call.

Then the Levites were made the instruments of God's judgments. Moses was not the author of the punishment that followed; it was the vengeance of God whom the Israelites had provoked to anger. Moses commanded, but it was in the name of God. "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour; and that day there fell of the people about 3,000 men." Then Moses interceded for the penitent: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet if Thou wilt forgive their sin . . . and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book." So in later times St. Paul was willing to be blotted out of Christ's kingdom for the sake of his kinsmen according to the flesh; and such love was never surpassed, we may believe, but by the love of Christ Jesus our Lord, Who died the just for the unjust.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXVII.

*Question.* Did the Lord still go on instructing Moses during the forty days and forty nights that he passed in the mount?

*Q.* What was the design of the worship that God instituted?

*Q.* What would the sacrifices teach those who wish to know the things of God?

*Q.* Did God give Moses any particular gift?

*Q.* How were the Israelites employed when Moses at last returned to them?

- Q. What did Moses do when he saw the people committing sin ?  
 Q. What was the punishment of the impenitent ?  
 Q. What did Moses do after causing God's vengeance to be executed upon the impenitent ?  
 Q. In what special manner did Moses show his love for the Israelites ?

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## LESSON XXVIII.

The Tent of Meeting—Without the camp—Loss of honour—God's Presence promised to the Israelites—Vision of God's glory—God talks with Moses in the sight of the people—Moses' second stay on Mount Sinai—Shining of Moses' face—The people bring offerings for the tabernacle.

*Read Ex. xxxiii. 7—23, xxxv.*

GOD spared the Israelites in that He did not utterly destroy them, but He still visited their sins upon them. Their ingratitude had been very great. When they first encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai, God said to them by Moses, "Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people : for all the earth is Mine : and ye shall be a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." And all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." And that the people might believe Moses for ever, God spake to him in mighty thunderings and by an audible voice ; so when the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they stood afar off and said to Moses, "Let not God speak with us lest we die." Moses told them not to fear ; that God had shown them these signs and wonders to prove them, and that His fear might be before their faces that they might not sin against Him. Moreover, the Lord said to them, "Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven : ye shall not make unto Me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold." Yet, notwithstanding all these promises and all these warnings, we have seen how quickly the people corrupted themselves and committed abomination before the Lord. And because they made the calf the Lord plagued the people, and He would no longer dwell in their midst. So Moses pitched the tent in which God met him, and talked with him "without the camp afar off," and called it "the Tent of Meeting."\*

This was an outward mark or sign of the distance that now separated God and His people ; and to mark their sense of

\* "Tabernacle of the Congregation" is not so good a translation of the original words.



their loss of honour in God's separation from them, "the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the Mount Horeb."\* Nevertheless, in answer to Moses' pleading God said to him, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest"; and moreover a vision of the skirts of the Divine Glory was vouchsafed to him while a voice proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth." Moreover it came to pass when Moses went out unto the Tent of Meeting, called here the Tabernacle of the Congregation (but it was not the Tabernacle of the Covenant), that all the people rose up and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses until he was gone into the tabernacle; and it came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle (or tent), and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door; and all the people rose up and worshipped every man in his tent door. And so Moses was honoured in the sight of the people, and the Lord spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend.

Once again, by God's command, Moses went up into the mount and took with him two tables of stone like unto the first, and God wrote on them all the words which were on the first tables, which Moses had cast down and broken in his holy anger. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation." And Moses worshipped, and encouraged by God's mercy towards His sinful people he prayed that the Lord Himself would "go among them." They are a stiff-necked people, but this he pleaded as a reason why the Lord should not leave them. So God pardoned His erring people and renewed His covenant with them.† He promised to be with them and to work wonders for them, and bring them into the Promised Land. They on their part were to make no covenant with the idolaters of that land, but to destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.

Many other commandments did God give to Moses about the government of His people and about the way in which they were to worship Him; and after again staying in the mount forty days and forty nights, he returned to the people and told them

\* Ex. xxxiii. 6.

† xxxiv. 10.

all the words of the Lord ; while his face so shone with the Divine glory that Aaron and all the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him : and Moses put a vail upon his face. This shining of Moses' face was a type of the glory of the Jewish dispensation, which, like that glory, was to last but a little while.

The seventh day was to be kept holy as a Sabbath of rest, and if any one did work on that day he was to be put to death.

Then Moses invited all who had willing hearts to bring



MOUNT SINAI.

offerings and gifts of various kinds to make the tabernacle, and for the service of God's sanctuary—gold, silver, and brass, fine linen, skins, precious stones, spices, oils, and sweet gums for incense. And so many hearts were stirred and spirits made willing that the people brought "much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded to make," so that they had to be restrained from bringing. So Christians in times of church restoration and church revival are called upon to give in the same willing spirit, and with hearts in like

manner stirred with zeal for the service of the sanctuary and for the honour and glory of God.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXVIII.

*Question.* Though God forgave the sin of the Israelites, and spared the lives of the penitent, in what way did He mark His displeasure at their idolatry of the golden calf?

*Q.* What did Moses do in consequence?

*Q.* Had Moses any particular meaning in view in pitching the tent in which he communed with God without the camp?

*Q.* How did the people show their sense of their loss of honour?

*Q.* What did God promise Moses in answer to his pleading?

*Q.* In what way did God honour Moses in the sight of the people?

*Q.* What took place this time during Moses' second stay in the mount?

*Q.* What was Moses encouraged to pray for?

*Q.* Did God grant Moses' prayer?

*Q.* What were the people required to do on their part?

*Q.* What important work did Moses begin as soon as he returned to the camp?

*Q.* Did the people take part in the work of the Tabernacle?

*Q.* Did the people give of their things willingly?



SHEKEL OF SILVER.

### LESSON XXIX.

The tabernacle set up—Solemn ceremonies of consecration—Death of Aaron's sons—Three kinds of sacrifices and the great Day of Atonement—Their typical meaning.

*Read Ex. xxix. 32–43, xl.; Lev. viii., ix.*

WITHIN six months from the commencement of the work the tabernacle and its furniture and all things belonging to it—the ark of the testimony, the golden altar and the brazen altar, the cloths of service and the holy garments for the priests—were finished and brought to Moses by the skilful men whom God had instructed, and Moses looked upon all the work, and behold they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it; and Moses blessed them. And on

the first day of the second year of the Exodus Moses reared up the tabernacle and brought the ark into it and lighted the lamps before the Lord. The tabernacle and all that was in it, the vessels and the altar of burnt-offering, Moses consecrated to the service of God by anointing them with holy oil as the Lord commanded him. All these things were regarded as holy by God's express command ; while the altar of burnt-offering was declared to be most holy, or, according to the more correct meaning of the Hebrew words, "holiness of holinesses." Aaron, too, and his sons were consecrated to the priests' office with the same oil and with solemn sacrifices. These solemn ceremonies of consecration were repeated seven



THE TABERNACLE.

times on seven successive days, and on the eighth day Aaron and his sons offered sacrifices, sin-offerings and burnt-offerings, for themselves and for the congregation. Then Moses and Aaron blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people ; and a fire from the Lord consumed the burnt-offering, all the people shouted and fell on their faces. They shouted for joy at this manifestation of God's Presence, and then fell down to worship. Yet this general rejoicing and these solemn services were saddened by one untoward event, by which Aaron lost his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, who "died before the Lord," for an act of disobedience and pro-

fanation—offering strange fire. The speechless grief of the father is described in the words, “Aaron held his peace.”

The sacrifices ordained of God, and now offered up by God’s consecrated priests, were of three kinds, and each kind had a distinctive meaning.

1. *Sin-offerings*, or trespass-offerings, which typified and shadowed forth the one true and perfect sacrifice and atonement for sin that was to be made in the fulness of time by the Son of God.

By these sin-offerings men acknowledged their sinfulness, and their inability to fulfil the law of God perfectly ; and that they could do nothing to take away sin ; and that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin.

2. *Burnt-offerings*—offerings of flour, fruits, oil, &c.

These represented the surrender of the will to God ; and as the one perfect example of submission to the will of God is the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ, so this was the thing typified and shadowed forth by the burnt-offerings of the Jewish law ; and by them the true Israelite, like the true Christian, presented himself to God, “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Him.”

3. The third kind of offering was the *peace-offering*.

Peace-offerings signified peace and reconciliation with God ; and this was the only kind of sacrifice of which the offerer might himself partake. Thus it was a type or pattern of the Holy Communion, in which we have communion with God, and with each other through Jesus Christ, our true Peace-offering, in whom alone we have peace with God.

Thus three kinds of sacrifice were necessary to show forth the one perfect sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all these were united in Him—expiation for sin, perfect obedience and entire surrender of the human will to God’s will, and communion with God in Jesus Christ.

In the 15th chapter of Leviticus we have an account of the ceremonies of the *Great Day of Atonement*, which were typical of the offering of Jesus Christ, that He died for our sins and rose again for our justification ; and to set forth these two doctrines two goats were necessary. The slain goat represented Christ’s sacrifice for sin ; and the other, which was let loose, showed that sin was transferred and carried away from the sinner and from God’s sight. “Typically the goat slain represents the Death of Christ ; the other, let loose, His Resurrection. Hence Good Friday is to the Churchman the Day of Atonement, and a day above all others of prayer, of confession of sins, of penitence, of deep meditation on what man is, and what Christ has done for him,”

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXIX.

*Question.* When was the tabernacle set up?

*Q.* How did Moses consecrate the tabernacle and all that belonged to it to God's service?

*Q.* How were Aaron and his sons consecrated to the priesthood?

*Q.* What happened when Moses and Aaron blessed the people?

*Q.* What sad event saddened this great festival?

*Q.* How many kinds of sacrifices were ordained by God?

What was the distinctive meaning of each of these sacrifices?

*Q.* Of what were the ceremonies of the *Great Day of Atonement* typical?

*Q.* What day is the Churchman's Day of Atonement?

*Q.* And how should the day be kept?

### LESSON XXX.

The three great feasts—The High Priest, the priests, and Levites—  
God's tent—The Shechinah cloud.

*Read Deut. xvi. 1—17, xxviii. 36; Numb. ix. 15—23.*

God commanded the Israelites to keep three Great Feasts or Festivals, which were to be seasons of holy rejoicing before the Lord, and these were the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

*The Feast of the Passover*, called also the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was instituted, as we have seen,\* on the night of the departure of Israel out of Egypt, and it was to be kept by the Israelites once a year, commencing on the 14th Nisan (April), in remembrance of their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt and their birth as a nation, of which Jehovah was the Great Divine King. But it had likewise a spiritual meaning. The Paschal lamb was a type of the true Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was sacrificed for us, and whose "precious blood" has delivered us from the bondage of sin.

*The Feast of Harvest, or of Weeks*—or, as it was afterwards called, the Feast of Pentecost, because it was held fifty days after the offering of the Paschal sheaf—was a festival of thanksgiving for the harvest, and it has been supposed to commemorate the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai fifty days after the departure from Egypt. Two loaves of leavened bread made from the new wheat, the first-fruits of the harvest, were waved before the Lord, and this was an essential and distinguishing feature of the feast. These loaves, made from the first-fruits of the harvest, were a type of Him who became the first-fruits of them that slept. Pentecost became the Whitsuntide of the Christian Church, when the Holy Ghost was poured

\* Ex. xii.

out, and the first-fruits of a mighty harvest were offered unto the Lord.

*The Feast of Tabernacles* was the last of the three great festivals, and it was the "harvest home" of the Israelites—a festival of thanksgiving to God, who had "made their garners full and plenteous with all manner of store." It was a very joyful festival, and during the seven days that it lasted the people dwelt in booths or bowers made of boughs and leaves, to remind them that once they dwelt in booths and led a wandering life in the wilderness, but now were settled in their own land.

At each of these three great festivals—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles—every male Israelite was to be present, so that he would thus present himself to the Lord three times every year. Women might attend these feasts, but with them it was voluntary; they were not commanded to do so.

We have seen that Aaron was consecrated to the office of High Priest. The High Priest only might enter the Holy of Holies with the blood of the Sacrifice and burn incense of atonement in it, and this only once a year on the Great Day of Atonement. Thus he was a type of Jesus Christ, who as our High Priest entered heaven with His own blood to appear in the presence of God for us. Aaron's sons were priests. They offered the morning and evening sacrifices, kept up the fire on the altar of burnt offerings, and supplied oil to the lamps in the golden candlesticks. They likewise instructed the people in the will of God. The Levites (all the men of the tribe of Levi) were the assistants of the priests.

The Israelites had now every assurance and were possessed of every sign that God was with them as their Leader and their King. The people dwelt in tents, and in the midst of them was the tabernacle—God's tent—on which manifest tokens of God's presence were visible. The Shechinah, the symbol of God's presence, rested on the tabernacle by day as a pillar of a cloud, and by night as a pillar of fire. As long as the cloud abode on the tabernacle the Israelites remained encamped; but when it was taken up they went onward on their journey. "Whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents and journeyed not; but when it was taken up they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed."\*

\* Numb. ix. 22, 23.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXX.

*Question.* How many great Feasts or Festivals were the Israelites commanded to observe?

*Q.* What did the Passover commemorate?

*Q.* Had it besides any inward or spiritual meaning?

*Q.* What was the name of the second great Feast of the Israelites?

*Q.* What does the name imply?

*Q.* What besides has it been supposed to commemorate?

*Q.* Had it any spiritual meaning?

*Q.* What did Pentecost become to the Christian Church?

*Q.* What was the name and what was the meaning of the third great Festival?

*Q.* Were the Israelites allowed to keep these festivals or not as they pleased?

*Q.* Who was consecrated to the office of High Priest? and of whom was the High Priest a type?

*Q.* Who were consecrated ordinary priests? and what were their duties?

### LESSON XXXI.

Moses numbers the people—The joyful march forward—The Israelites demand flesh to eat—Seventy elders appointed to help Moses—God sends the Israelites flesh, but smites them with a plague—Miriam and Aaron murmur against Moses—God vindicates Moses.

*Read Numb. i., ii., xi., xii.*

THE Israelites, as we have said, first encamped in Horeb, at the foot of Mount Sinai, in the third month of the first year (after leaving Egypt), so that when, by the lifting of the cloud, the signal was given to journey onwards, on the 20th day of the second month of the second year, they had been encamped for nearly one year. On the first day of the second month of the second year Moses had numbered the people able to bear arms from twenty years old and upwards, by God's command, and he found that they formed a mighty army of about 600,000 men. The Passover had been kept for the second time on the anniversary of the departure from Egypt; and now this great multitude, with God as their Leader, set out once more on what might have been a joyous march, followed by a speedy conquest of the Promised Land. The standards of Judah, the tribe of Judah with its standards, and the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun were first in order, and preceded the tabernacle; Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin were in the rear; and by this onward march of the Israelites we are reminded of the passage through the world of the Church militant and the spiritual life of individual Christians. The Israelites shouted as they moved forward:—

"Rise up, Jehovah, and let Thine enemies be scattered,  
And let them which hate Thee flee before Thee."



So those who fight under Christ's banner chant the praise of the same Jehovah, and press forward as they sing—

"Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,  
With the Cross of Jesus going on before."

The happiness of the Israelites was soon marred, however, by their own ungrateful and rebellious behaviour.

First at Taberah, about three days' journey from Mount Sinai, the people complained. The exact cause of their murmuring is not stated, but we may suppose it was on account of the hardships of the way. God's anger was kindled, and His fire burnt among them and consumed some of them. Again at Kibroth-hattaavah and at Hazeroth murmuring and rebellious conduct called down God's judgments upon His people. The mixed multitude of strangers, camp-followers, and others sprung from marriages of Israelites with Egyptians, began the discontent, and the Israelites followed their example. They were tired of the manna, and remembering the meat and vegetables of Egypt, demanded of Moses that he should give them flesh to eat; and the Lord's anger was greatly kindled against them. Moses cried to God, and confessed that the burden of responsibility—the task of ruling the people—was too great for him. God answered his prayer. Moses was to choose seventy elders of the people to be officers over them, and to bear the burden of the people with him. And God gave them of His Spirit, even a portion of the spirit that was upon Moses, and the people should be satisfied with flesh according to their desire; yea, God would give it to them a whole month, until it became loathsome to them, for He would give it in His wrath, and He would plague them with a great plague. Moses wondered how the people could be fed with flesh for a whole month in the wilderness. "The people among whom I am," he said, "are 600,000 footmen. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?" But the Lord answered him, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? Thou shalt see whether My word shall come to pass unto thee or not." So a wind from the Lord brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, and in such numbers that the people gathered the quails all that day and all that night, and all the next day; but while the flesh was yet in their mouths the wrath of God came upon them and smote them with a very great plague.

At Hazeroth Moses had to encounter a still sorer trial. His own near relatives, Miriam and Aaron, took upon themselves to reprove Moses for having married a foreigner, and they claimed

to have an equal authority with him. But God Himself vindicated His servant, and declared how with him only He spoke "mouth to mouth," and Moses alone beheld the similitude of the Lord. "Wherefore," said the Lord, "were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them. Miriam was smitten with leprosy, but in answer to the prayer of Moses God healed her. Aaron, as High Priest, suffered no outward punishment beyond the Lord's rebuke.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXXI.

*Question.* When did the Israelites break up their camp in Horeb, at the foot of Mount Sinai, and resume their journey?

*Q.* How long had they been encamped in Horeb?

*Q.* How many fighting men were then in the camp of the Israelites?

*Q.* What happened at Taberah, their first resting-place?

*Q.* Was there any murmuring after this?

*Q.* Did they complain to Moses?

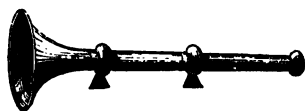
*Q.* What did Moses do?

*Q.* How did God answer his prayer?

*Q.* How did God fulfil His promise and punish the rebellious people?

*Q.* What still greater trial afflicted Moses at Hazeroth?

*Q.* How did God vindicate His servant Moses?



ANCIENT TRUMPET.

### LESSON XXXII.

The Israelites at Kadesh-barnea—The spies—Their report of the Promised Land—Murmuring of the people—Their punishment—Invading Canaan contrary to God's command they are driven back with slaughter.

*Read Numb. xiii., xiv.; Deut. i.*

WHEN Miriam returned to the camp, from which she had been banished during the days of her leprosy, the Israelites went forward through the wilderness of Paran to Kadesh-barnea, on the southern borders of Canaan. But before invading the country the Lord commanded to send twelve men to search it out, and to bring word about it, whether it was fertile or barren, good or bad; whether its cities and towns were strongholds, or weak places easy to be taken; and whether its inhabitants were warlike or unwarlike, few or many.

So twelve men, one man from each tribe, went into the land

of Canaan, and after searching it out for forty days they returned to the camp at Kadesh, bearing upon a staff between two men a single cluster of grapes that they had cut in the valley of Eschol, besides pomegranates and figs. And they said to Moses and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, "This land floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great; and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak there . . . men of great stature, giants . . . and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Now, when the people heard this evil report of the Land of Promise they proved themselves to be a nation of slaves, and only fit for slavery. Instead of showing confidence in God's almighty power, and remembering His marvellous deliverances in times past, they gave way to despair, and nothing was heard but the voice of lamentation. They murmured against Moses, and even against God, and proposed an immediate return to Egypt. "Let us make a captain," they said, "and let us return to Egypt." There were two faithful spies, Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun—and at the risk of their lives they gave very different advice. "The land," they said, "which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not against the Lord, and so forfeit His help. Fear not the people of the land; their defence is departed, and the Lord is with us; fear them not." But this, so far from pacifying the people, only made them the more furious, and they bade stone the faithful spies with stones. Then the anger of the Lord was greatly kindled, and His glory appeared in the Tabernacle of the congregation before all the people. Again the Lord threatened to destroy the Israelites, and renewed His offer to Moses to make of him a greater and mightier nation. Now again Moses interceded for these rebellious children of Israel: "Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of Thy mercy;" and God's gracious answer was, "I have pardoned according to thy word: yet not one of them shall see the land which God swear unto their fathers, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in the wilderness." The ten spies who brought up the evil report and slander upon the land, and who made the congregation to murmur, died of the plague

before the Lord. And the people mourned greatly. Yet theirs was not a repentance of a godly sort, but rather a reckless despair which bore the fruit of disobedience and presumption. When the Lord commanded them to go up and possess the land they had not the courage and the faith to take possession of it; but when God forbade them to enter it, then, spite of the warning of Moses, they resolved to pass over into it, and were driven back with great slaughter by the Amalekites and Amorites.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXXII.

*Question.* When the Israelites came to Kadesh-barnea, on the southern borders of Canaan, what did God command Moses to do?

*Q.* And when the spies returned to the camp after forty days what report of the land did they make?

*Q.* What did the people do when they heard the report that the spies gave of the land?

*Q.* Did all the spies bring the same report of the land?

*Q.* Did the report and persuasions of Caleb and Joshua pacify the people?

*Q.* What were the Lord's words to Moses, and what did Moses say to them?

*Q.* What answer did the Lord make to Moses' prayer?

*Q.* But what temporal punishment were the Israelites to suffer?

*Q.* Did the people repent truly when they heard how God would punish them?

*Q.* In what other way did they show their disobedience and presumption?

### LESSON XXXIII.

Penal wandering in the wilderness—Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—The people smitten with the plague—Aaron makes atonement for them—Aaron a type of Christ—The trial of the rods.

THE Israelites had come to the borders of the Land of Promise, and, by God's help, they might soon have entered it, and possessed themselves of it; but now all was changed. The command of God to them was no longer "Go up and possess the land," but "Turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea"; and for despising the Land of Promise, and distrusting their Almighty Leader, their punishment was to be confined to the wilderness for a period of forty years from the time of their departure from Egypt—one year for every day passed by the spies in the land of Canaan. Here they were to wander, making fruitless journeys hither and thither, until the rebels and the despisers of the good land had fallen one by one in the desert, and a new generation had arisen, taught and disciplined by years of care and training. At first, as we have

seen, God said He would disinherit His rebellious people, and smite them with the pestilence, but for the sake of His servant Moses, and in answer to his "effectual fervent prayer," He turned away His wrath and suffered not His whole displeasure to arise. And now, because of "the provocation," the Israelites entered upon "the day of temptation in the wilderness." Very little is told us about this period of thirty-eight years, but it was naturally a season of discontent; and this arose to a dangerous height in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, against the authority of Moses, and the priesthood of Aaron and his family. Korah, the Levite, was the ringleader, and denounced especially the Aaronic priesthood; Dathan and Abiram, two princes of the tribe of Reuben, took also an active part in exciting discontent. They accused Moses of making himself a prince over them, and leading them into the wilderness to kill them. God had said that the Israelites should be a "kingdom of priests," and a "holy nation,"\* and Korah made this a reason for denying the authority of those who had been especially consecrated to minister as priests before the Lord; and he seems to have been a type of those who in this day deny the authority of the Christian priesthood on the ground that all Christians are kings and priests to God.

The pretended assertors of the rights of the people in the Israelitish camp "gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" When Moses heard these words he fell upon his face, and prayed to God for help and guidance. Then, turning to Korah and his followers, he said, "To-morrow the Lord will show who are His, and who is holy." A test was proposed. For once these men were to act as priests, and to offer incense before the Lord on the morrow, and God would make it plain whether or not He had called them to the office, or whether they had thrust themselves into it; and on the morrow they took every man his censer and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron; and all the congregation were gathered by Korah at the door of the tabernacle. They all seem to have taken part with the leaders of the rebellion, and God would have destroyed them together had not Moses again stood between God and His people to turn away His wrath that He might not consume them. In answer to the prayers of Moses and Aaron, the congregation were commanded to separate

\* *Ex.* xix. 6.

themselves from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and then Moses said to the assembled people, "Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works. If these men die the common death of all men the Lord hath not sent me; but if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men who appertained unto them went down alive into the pit; and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."

Yet even these awful judgments did not put an end to the rebellious spirit that so deeply infected the congregation of Israel; for on the morrow they gathered against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." This brought down upon them another and terrible judgment. Suddenly the glory of the Lord appeared, and the cloud covered the tabernacle; and the anger of the Lord would have consumed the whole congregation had not Moses and Aaron interceded for them. But wrath had gone out from the Lord, and the plague was already making havoc with the people. Then Aaron, forgetting his own wrongs, hastened at the command of Moses to make an atonement for them. Kindling the incense in his censer with the sacred fire from off the altar, he *ran* into the midst of the congregation and stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed, but not till 14,700 of the people had perished. In this striking picture Aaron is a type of our glorious High Priest the Lord Jesus Christ, who hastened down from His throne of glory to make an atonement for us, to become our Mediator—the One Mediator between God and man—to reconcile us to God.

Thus it was made clear that God had ordained that Aaron and his sons alone were to minister before Him as priests of the sanctuary. The Israelites were, indeed, a nation of priests; but only one specially called of God, as was Aaron, might take the holy office of high priest; and only those whom God had consecrated to be priests might offer incense and sacrifices. Yet, that the Israelites might be without excuse, God gave them yet another sign. God commanded Moses

to take twelve rods, and to write on them the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, one name on every rod, and Aaron's name was to be upon the rod of the tribe of Levi. These were laid up in the tabernacle, before the ark. "The man's rod whom I shall choose, shall blossom," said the Lord. And on the morrow behold the rod of Aaron was budded, and brought forth blossoms, and yielded almonds; and the Lord commanded it to be kept as a witness against the rebels. But when Moses brought forth the rods, and beheld how Aaron's rod had yielded almonds, they were conscience-stricken, and cried out, "We die, we perish, we all perish."

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXXIII.

*Question.* In what special way did the Israelites show their rebellious spirit during their penal wanderings?

*Q.* Who were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram?

*Q.* Against what did these men and their followers rebel?

*Q.* What reasons did they give for their conduct?

*Q.* How did Moses act?

*Q.* Did God's judgments upon the ringleaders put an end to the rebellious spirit amongst the people?

*Q.* What was their punishment?

*Q.* How was the plague stayed?

*Q.* In standing between the living and the dead, and making an atonement for the people, of whom was Aaron a type?

### LESSON XXXIV.

The Israelites encamp again at Kadesh-barnea—Death of Miriam—Murmuring of the people—Sin of Moses and Aaron—They seek to enter Canaan from the east—The Edomites bar their way—The Israelites pass to the east of Mount Seir—Death of Aaron at Mount Hor—The serpent of brass.

*Read Numb. xx., xxi. 1—9.*

For thirty-eight years the Israelites went hither and thither in the wilderness, journeying and encamping according to the leading of the pillar of cloud. The tract of country around Mount Sinai, about thirty miles across, and the most fertile portion of the peninsula, is supposed to have been the scene of their wanderings. We know for certain, however, that at the beginning of the fortieth year from their emancipation from the slavery of Egypt they encamped again at Kadesh-barnea, in the southern border land of Canaan, where, about thirty-eight years before, their fathers had said: "Let us make a captain, and let us return unto Egypt." Here Moses and Aaron had to mourn the death of their sister Miriam. Nor were the troubles of Moses with the Israelites at an end.

Here, at the very same place, thirty-eight years before, they had provoked the Lord by their murmuring and rebellious spirit, and now their children proved themselves to be like their fathers, a stiff-necked and rebellious people. Their fathers had said, "Would to God we had died in Egypt; wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land? Let us return to Egypt"; and now their children, when water failed them, repeated, after so many warnings and so many deliverances, almost the words of the former generation, and asked, "Why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us unto this evil place?"\* In answer to Moses' prayer the stony



WILDERNESS OF SINAI.

rock yielded the life-giving stream, and so became again a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gives us the water of life freely. Moses was not to smite the rock as on a former occasion, he was only to speak to it; but even the meekness of Moses was at last overcome by the ingratitude and unbelief of the Israelites, and so (contrary to God's command) he smote the rock twice, and exclaimed, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" Thus he spake unadvisedly with his lips, and believed not God to sanctify Him in the eyes of the children of Israel. "Therefore," said God, "ye" (Moses and Aaron) "shall not bring this congregation into the land

\* Num. xx. 4, 5.



which I have given them." Aaron did not hinder Moses, and so, partaking of his sin, he shared not only his brother's guilt but his punishment. And though the people were allowed to enter Canaan it was only after long wanderings in a great and terrible wilderness. The Israelites were now quite close to Canaan, but at this time it was not easy for a hostile army to invade Canaan by passing over its southern frontier, which was hilly, strongly fortified, and inhabited by numerous and warlike tribes. An invading army never attempts to enter a country where it is strongest, but seeks for some weakly defended part of it. The Israelites, however, were not like other people, for *their* Leader and *their* Captain was the Lord God Almighty, and He had promised to make them victorious over the wicked people of Canaan. So, if they had possessed faith in God there was no reason why they should not have entered the Land of Promise at that portion of it that was nearest to them. But the whole history of the Israelites in the wilderness tells us that they were faithless, wilful, and disobedient—that they thought more of the difficulties and dangers of the way than of the strength of the Almighty Arm that fought for them, and protected them. So they did not attempt to pass over the southern frontier into Canaan, but sought rather to go round by way of the Dead Sea to the eastern frontier, and then, crossing over the Jordan, to enter the country where it was richest and easiest of access. Their way was barred by the Edomites, who refused the Israelites a passage through their country. So they had to march south through the valley of El Araba, as far as Elath on the eastern Gulf of the Red Sea, to get on the eastern side of the lofty and precipitous ridge of Mount Seir. By this means they skirted round the country of the Edomites, and took them in flank, and so went forward towards the north, the Edomites offering no resistance. From Kadesh the Israelites journeyed to Mount Hor; and at Mount Hor Aaron was gathered unto his people, for he was not to enter the land which God had given to the Israelites, because he rebelled with Moses against the word of the Lord at the waters of Meribah. The Lord's commandment to Moses was, "Take Aaron, and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto Mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son. And Aaron died there on the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel."

From Mount Hor the Israelites journeyed south, as has been said, through the valley of Arabah—the "terrible" wilderness—and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the

way, and again they gave vent to their discontent in murmurs against Moses and against God. To punish their ingratitude God multiplied the poisonous serpents of the district, and from their fiery bite no one recovered. Then the people confessed that they had sinned, and in answer to Moses' prayer God appointed a wonderful remedy. Moses was to make a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived. Our Lord Himself explained the type, and pointed to Himself as the fulfilment of it: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."\* Faith was required in the Israelite who was bitten: he was to gaze in faith upon the brazen serpent; and so the sinner must look in faith upon the uplifted Son of Man, and the consequence is spiritual life and spiritual health.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXXIV.

*Question.* What part of the peninsula of Sinai is supposed to have been the scene of the thirty-eight years' penal wanderings of the Israelites?

*Q.* At the beginning of the fortieth year from the time of their departure from Egypt, where did the Israelites encamp?

*Q.* What was the behaviour of the Israelites at Kadesh upon this latter occasion?

*Q.* What did the Lord tell Moses to do?

*Q.* Did Moses obey the Lord in this matter?

*Q.* Was the Lord displeased with Moses and Aaron for their conduct in this matter, and what was their punishment?

*Q.* Were the people also punished?

*Q.* What happened at Mount Hor, where the Israelites next encamped?

*Q.* What course did the Israelites take on leaving Mount Hor?

*Q.* What happened by the way?

*Q.* How did God punish them?

*Q.* Did God's punishment bring them to repentance?

*Q.* What remedy did God provide for those bitten by the serpents?

*Q.* Of what was the serpent of brass a type?

#### LESSON XXXV.

Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, King of Bashan, oppose the Israelites—The Israelites smite them, and possess their lands—Balak and Balaam—Baal-peor—Judgments of God upon the Israelites—War of vengeance against the Moabites.

*Read Numb. xxi.—xxv.*

THE Israelites would have marched quietly through the countries east of the Jordan, and outside the Land of Promise, had the people who inhabited those countries permitted them to do so. They refused, however, to allow the mysterious strangers to enter

\* St. John iii. 14, 15.

their territories, and so the Israelites were compelled to conquer them that they might go forward and take possession of Canaan. We have seen that in consequence of the refusal of the Edomites to allow them to pass through their country, they were obliged to make a circuitous journey round it, and to journey southward through the terrible desert of Arabah as far as the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, where the precipitous range of Mount Seir terminates, or is very low. Passing to the eastern side of it, they then turned northwards, and the Edomites seeing that they were taken in flank, and that the Israelites were on the open side of their country, offered no further resistance to them. Other nations were, however, ready to dispute their advance. Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, the giant King of Bashan, both refused the Israelites a passage through their territories. The country from the river Arnon to the Jabbok was held, at this time, by the Amorites, and the capital of the kingdom was Heshbon. Their king, Sihon, not only rejected the peaceful message of the Israelites, but went out with all his people into the wilderness to fight against them ; but the Israelites smote them with the edge of the sword, and took their country for a possession. Beyond the river Jabbok, extending to Mount Hermon, was the kingdom of Bashan ; and Og, the King of Bashan, likewise fought against the Israelites ; but the Lord delivered him also into their hands, and " they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive, and they possessed his land."\*

Another people who inhabited the country east of Canaan, and on its borders, were the Moabites. Balak, King of the Moabites, did not fight against the Israelites, like the King of the Amorites and the King of Bashan, but this was not from any friendly feeling, for it was because he was sore afraid of them, and feared he might share the fate of Sihon and of Og. So Balak took counsel with the elders of Midian how they might destroy the strangers who had come amongst them, and who, having defeated both the King of the Amorites and the King of Bashan, had gained possession of the whole eastern bank of the Jordan. The fate of these kings was a warning to him. He knew, besides, that the Israelites boasted that they were the people of Jehovah, and that their God fought for them. So he sought to gain supernatural help, and he even thought that a prophet of God might be bribed to curse the people of God. He sent, therefore, to Balaam, a prophet, diviner, or sorcerer, who lived at Pethor, in Mesopotamia, and who was known far and wide as being possessed, it was thought, of a power, and which he was willing to use in the service of those who came to

\* Numb. xxi. 21—35.

him "with the rewards of divination in their hands," for he was a covetous man, caring more for riches and honours than for the honour and glory of God and the good of His people. God had expressly forbidden him to go to Balak, or to curse Israel, for the people of Israel, God said, were blessed; yet when the messengers of Balak came again to him, offering him great riches and honours in the name of the King of Moab, he begged them to tarry while he again inquired of the Lord. God permitted him to go to Balak, but he was only to speak the word of the Lord. And the word that God put into Balaam's mouth was altogether a blessing, until Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam. "I called thee," he said, "to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast blessed them these three times." Yet Balaam, still hankering after rewards and honours, lingered in the country to plot the destruction of the Israelites, tempting them to join Midianites and Moabites in celebrating the great heathen festival of Baal-peor, and so calling down God's judgments upon them. In the plague that followed as the judgment of God upon the guilty people, 24,000 of the Israelites perished, and in the war of vengeance that they waged against the Midianites Balaam himself was slain, and so received the wages of his unrighteousness.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXXV

*Question.* Did the Israelites wish to make war with the nations outside the Land of Promise?

*Q.* What nations did the Israelites conquer on the eastern border of Canaan?

*Q.* Did the Moabites make war upon the Israelites?

*Q.* What measures did Balak King of the Moabites take to destroy the power of the Israelites?

*Q.* In what way did Balaam bring God's curse upon the Israelites?

*Q.* What was the end of Balaam?

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#### LESSON XXXVI.

Moses' last words to Israel—Moses beholds the Land of Promise from the top of Pisgah—Death of Moses—Mourning of Israel for Moses—Moses pointed perpetually to Christ.

*Read Deut. xxvii.—xxxiv.*

THE fortieth year of the wanderings of the children of Israel was now drawing to a close, and it had been a memorable one in their history. It began with the arrival of the people for the second time at Kadesh, which was followed by the death of Miriam, and by the sin of Moses in smiting the rock. The Israelites, refused by the Edomites a passage through their land, had to turn down southward to the Red Sea, and so to

reach the land of their destination by the circuitous route of Moab and the country east of the Jordan. Aaron, in the meantime, had died at Mount Hor; the plague of fiery serpents had afflicted them; the whole land of Sihon and Og had been conquered; the prophecy of Balaam had been delivered, followed by the sin at Baal-peor, and the victory over Midian. Two months still remained to complete the year and the time of their sojourn in the wilderness; and with the waning year the eventful life of Moses was drawing to a close. He had accomplished the great work that God had given him to do, and he who had for forty years been the father of the chosen people—their Prophet, Leader, Lawgiver, Mediator, Historian, and Poet—was now to hand over his charge to another. Yet once more, and for the last time, the voice of Moses addressed to the Israelites weighty words of exhortation and encouragement and benediction, as he told them of all the blessings that should be theirs so long as they obeyed the voice of the Lord their God; but these were followed by warnings the most solemn, and denunciations the most terrible against all departure from the law of the Lord. “And it shall come to pass, if thou hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth. . . . The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face; they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and He shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. . . . But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, the Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee till thou be destroyed. . . . And thou shalt become an astonishment, and a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.”

In spite of these clear and terrible warnings the Israelites hearkened not to the voice of the Lord their God, but continued to be a stiff-necked and rebellious people, prone to idolatry and heathen customs, persecuting the prophets, and at last filling up the measure of their sins by crucifying their Messiah, the Son of God. Since then, in sieges, oppression, and persecutions

amongst all the nations of the earth, they have suffered the evils with which Moses threatened them in this his last charge. "We seem to see the noble and stately figure of Israel's Law-giver standing on the plains of Moab, and uttering loving words of exhortation. His eye kindles with keener brightness as he recounts the mercies of all these forty years passed in the great and terrible wilderness; and yet again they seem dimmed with tears as, with passionate sorrow and sad forebodings, he looks forward to the future, and sees the people 'utterly corrupting' themselves, and evil befalling them."

And now the time had come for Moses, the faithful servant of God, to enter into his rest. He ascended "from the plains of Moab," where he had spoken all these words, to the top of Pisgah, in the high tableland of the chain of Abarim, of which Mount Nebo was the highest mountain-top opposite Jericho, and from this height God showed him the goodly Land of Promise, but he was not to set his foot in it. Then Moses, being 120 years old, died, and was buried in a valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor; and we are told "Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days."

Moses was the founder and mediator of the Old Covenant, and as long as the Old Covenant lasted no prophet did arise as great as Moses, yet he was but a type and forerunner of One worthy of greater honour—Jesus Christ, the Founder and Mediator of the New and Everlasting Covenant, of whom Moses spoke when he said that God would raise up a prophet like unto Himself; in sacrifice and ritual, by types and by shadows, Moses pointed perpetually to Him in whom all types would be fulfilled, and who would be the very Substance of which the shadows of the Mosaic ritual had been but the dim outline.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXXVI.

*Question.* What were the principal events of the last or fortieth year of the wanderings of the children of Israel?

*Q.* What great event happened towards the end of this fortieth year?

*Q.* What had Moses been to the Israelites for forty years?

*Q.* In what way did Moses seek to benefit the Israelites before his death?

*Q.* Where did Moses die?

*Q.* How long did the Israelites mourn for Moses?

*Q.* Was Moses the greatest prophet of the Old Covenant?

*Q.* Of whom was Moses a type?

*Q.* Are all types fulfilled in Jesus Christ?

## LESSON XXXVII.

Lessons taught by the pilgrimage of the Israelites to Canaan—Joshua succeeds Moses as the leader of the Israelites—God encourages Joshua by gracious promises.

*Read Josh. i. 1—9.*

WITH the month of mourning for the death of Moses the fortieth year of the wanderings of the Israelites was accomplished, and before passing on to the next stage in the history of the chosen people it will be well to consider what lessons are to be learnt from the pilgrimage of the elect people from Egypt to Canaan.

First, then, this pilgrimage is "a type and figure of the Church of Christ in its passage through the wilderness of this world, with its struggles, trials, and daily supplies of heavenly helps for daily needs." It is also a type of the experience of individual Christians in this world, in which they are pilgrims to a heavenly country; "but before this can be reached God's children have to pass through probation and trial. All must pass through this world to reach the heavenly Canaan. All are, for the time, strangers and pilgrims, subject to like changes of rising and falling, joy and fear. Though the pillar of cloud precede us, and the Presence of God be with us, there is yearning after the flesh pots of Egypt. We shrink from taking up the cross daily and following Christ; we dislike the holy laws and the helpful means which His Church prescribes."

But to return to the history of the Israelites. Moses was now dead, but the people he had loved so much, and for whom he had suffered so much, were not left without a leader. When God told Moses that he should be gathered to his fathers after he had beheld afar off the good land in which he was not to set his foot, he spake unto the Lord, and besought Him to put a man over the congregation who might lead them out and bring them in, that the people of the Lord might not be as sheep having no shepherd. And the Lord said unto Moses, "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hands upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation, and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim before the Lord; at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of

Israel with him, even all the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him : and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.\* Thus Joshua was to take up the work of Moses when that faithful servant of God had left it to enter into his rest. He was to be the captain and leader of the children of Israel, and like Moses he was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Captain of our salvation, who opened up the heavenly Canaan to His people. He bore likewise that sacred name Joshua (God is the Saviour), which in its Greek form of Jesus is above every name. Joshua, solemnly called and consecrated to the work, waited for God's distinct command to enter upon it, and after God had taken Moses to Himself He spoke plainly to Joshua and said, "Moses My servant is dead ; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life : as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee : I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage : for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth ; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein : for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee ? Be strong and of a good courage ; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed : for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." Thus encouraged Joshua might indeed go boldly forward and say, "The Lord is my Helper, whom then shall I fear?" and in God's strength he went forth conquering and to conquer, until the people of Canaan were conquered, though not wholly extirpated, and the land was parcelled out amongst the several tribes.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXXVII.

*Question.* What are the lessons to be learnt from the pilgrimage of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, and of what is it a type?

*Q.* And what does it exhort Christians to do?

*Q.* When Moses died were the Israelites left without a leader or guide?

\* Numb. xxvii. 15—23.



- Q. What is the meaning of the name Joshua?  
Q. What did God say to Joshua after the death of Moses?  
Q. And what promises did God make to Joshua?  
Q. In what further way did the Lord encourage Joshua?  
Q. Did God give Joshua any particular command?
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## LESSON XXXVIII.

Joshua sends two spies to Jericho—Rahab and the spies—The spies return to Joshua—Jordan driven back—The Israelites cross over Jordan—They encamp at Gilgal, on the plains of Jericho—Joshua restores covenant rites to the Israelites—They keep the Passover Feast—The Lord appears to Joshua as Captain of the armies of Israel.

*Read Josh. ii.—v.*

THOUGH God had given Joshua such gracious assurances of victory and triumph, yet, like a skilful and careful general, he made use of every human means in his power to ensure success. So he sent spies to report upon the people of the land, and to observe what preparation they had made for repelling the invaders. Meanwhile he prepared the people for crossing Jordan on the third day, and beginning the campaign. The great city of Jericho, built upon a plain about six miles west of the Jordan, was strong and well fortified, and being the key of all the southern portion of the country, would be the first place to be attacked by the invading army of the Israelites. So the spies went to Jericho, where they found lodging and concealment with Rahab, a woman of the country, who believed in the God of Israel, and whose heart God had inclined to treat His people with kindness. She protected the spies at the risk of her life by concealing them in her house, and by sending the messengers of the King of Jericho in a wrong direction to look for them. Then when the pursuers had departed she let down the spies by a cord through a window of her house, which was built upon the wall of the town. And after staying three days in the mountainous country west of Jericho, till the pursuers had gone back to the King of Jericho, the spies returned to the Israelitish camp and reported to Joshua all that Rahab had told them. And what had Rahab told them? She said, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things our

hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you : for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." It was clear then that the people of Canaan were terror-stricken, and when Joshua heard these things he said, "Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land ; for even all the inhabitants of the land do faint because of us."

The Israelites had now come to the river Jordan. God's command to Joshua was, "Arise, go over Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel." But how was this to be done? It was the season of the flood, the spring of the year, when the river, swollen by the rains and by the melting of the snow on Mount Lebanon, was at its greatest breadth. How could the Israelites—not only the men of war, but the women and the children and the whole nation—cross this broad and rapid stream without a bridge and without boats?

Joshua was now to be their leader and captain, and he showed no hesitation in obeying the Lord's command to go over Jordan, he and all the people. He said to the people, "Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites. . . . Behold, the ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. . . . And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above ; and they shall stand upon an heap." And so it happened. As soon as the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water as it overflowed its banks, "Jordan was driven back," its rushing waters were stopped suddenly in their course, but not by a mighty wind nor turn of the tide, nor by any natural means, and the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan. And as the waters from above ceased to flow onwards and downwards the whole bed of the river from where the priests stood to the Dead Sea was left dry. All the Israelites passed over on dry ground until all the people were passed clean over Jordan. By this mighty miracle, as in the passage of the Red Sea, the Lord showed Himself in the midst of His people, and they knew that He was indeed "the Lord of all the earth," a very "living God" ; and that Joshua was appointed to stand between Him and them, and to be their leader and guide as Moses had been before him, for the Lord had magnified Joshua that day in the sight of all Israel, and they feared

him as they feared Moses all the days of his life. Forty thousand men of war, the army of the Israelites, were speedily encamped on the plains of Jericho, and little wonder it was that "when all the kings of the Amorites which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel until they were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more because of the children of Israel." Neither circumcision nor the feast of the Passover had been observed during the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites, but now the covenant rites were to be restored; so all the males were circumcised and they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at Gilgal, in the plains of Jericho. In thus restoring to the Israelites the covenant rites Joshua was a type of Christ the true Joshua, who brought His people, the spiritual Israel, into a new covenant with God, founded upon better promises, by a circumcision "made without hands," a "circumcision of the heart in the Spirit and not in the letter." The people had all the corn of the land and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land. Joshua and his men of war were now in the long sought land of Canaan, and had only to go boldly forward and conquer all who resisted them. As an additional encouragement to Joshua, the captain of the host of the Lord, the Lord Himself appeared to him as the Captain of the host of the Lord—a visible representation of the Invisible God—and further instructed him how he was to proceed in the conquest of the land.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXXVIII.

*Question.* What means did Joshua use to ascertain the state of feeling and preparation amongst the people of Canaan.

*Q.* How did the spies speed in their mission?

*Q.* What did Rahab tell the spies about the people of the land?

*Q.* What did Joshua say when he heard what Rahab had said?

*Q.* Did Joshua hesitate to obey God's command to go over Jordan, he and all the people?

*Q.* Did the miraculous passage come to pass as Joshua had said?

*Q.* What did God specially make known to the Israelites by this mighty miracle?

*Q.* What other end did it answer?

*Q.* What was the first thing Joshua did when the Israelites were all encamped on the plains of Jericho?

*Q.* Of whom was Joshua a type in thus restoring to Israel their covenant rites?

*Q.* What additional encouragement did the Lord give Joshua at this time?

## LESSON XXXIX.

Siege of Jericho—The Israelites repulsed from Ai—Sin and punishment of Achan—Joshua's great trouble—Ai taken—Sin hinders God's promises.

*Read Josh. vi.—viii. 1—29.*

WHEN all the kings of the country near the sea on the west side of Jordan heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan before the children of Israel, their hearts melted, for it was a miracle even more marvellous than the passage of the



THE ISRAELITES WALKING ROUND JERICO.

Red Sea. No natural agency, but the will of the Almighty alone, had arrested the rushing waters of Jordan, and made them to stand in a heap rather than overflow the sacred ark of the God of Israel. And now these mysterious strangers were encamped on the plains outside Jericho.

The walls of the city were indeed high and strong, and the Israelites had no means of scaling them or of battering down their gates; but all this was of no avail against omnipotent power. The inhabitants of Jericho must have gazed with

trembling awe upon the strange procession that they saw wending its way around their battlements—the men of war, the seven priests with their seven trumpets of rams' horns, the ark of the Lord God of Israel. No sound was heard but the measured tramp of the armed men, and the wailing of the trumpets. Day after day, for seven days, this solemn procession walked once round the city, but on the seventh day it compassed it seven times. Then the priests blew with the trumpets, and Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city." So the people shouted with a great shout, and, lo! the walls fell down flat, and the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city; and all the inhabitants of the city, whom God had given over to destruction, and every living thing, were slain, for God's wrath was now poured out upon a people whose measure of iniquity was full. Only Rahab and her household were saved alive, because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. Thus the taking of Jericho was the Lord's work, and not man's. Implicit obedience and a real faith in God's power were the two things required of the Israelites as their part in the work; we are told that by faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days. The accursed city was burned with fire, only the silver and the gold and the vessels of brass and of iron were put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.

But very soon after the taking of Jericho a terrible warning was given to the Israelites, and a proof that nothing could be hidden from Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. If any of the people were guilty of disobedience or sacrilege God's help was to be withdrawn from them, and they were to be made to feel that it was not by their own valour and by their own skill that they were gaining so easy a conquest over the people of Canaan. This was now brought home to them by a bitter experience.

After the fall of Jericho, the most important town in the west of Canaan, Joshua sent spies to Ai, a royal city to the east of Bethel, who, finding it a place of no great strength, reported that not more than 3,000 men need be despatched against it. A detachment, therefore, of 3,000 men were sent to attack it, but they were repulsed with the loss of thirty-six of their number. This reverse was a great discouragement to the Israelites, and Joshua regarded it as a terrible calamity, for it was a sign that God had withdrawn His presence and His protection. His cry to God was very grievous. He said, "Alas! O Lord God, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over

Jordan, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? Would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side of Jordan. O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?" What in that case would become of the honour and credit of God's holy name? This was Joshua's great trouble, for had not God promised and pledged His word to be with Joshua as He had been with Moses, and neither to fail him nor forsake him? Ah, it was not God who had been unfaithful, but Israel who had sinned and transgressed His covenant and taken, sacrilegiously stolen, the things devoted to the service of God. One man only had done this thing, but he belonged to a great company, to God's chosen people. His sin, therefore, was reckoned as the sin of the whole nation, and so brought condemnation upon every member of it; for God said, "Israel" (not Achan only) "hath sinned, and they have taken of the accursed thing." And it is just the same now as in the days of old. Every baptized Christian is a member of an elect people—the spiritual Israel, Christ's kingdom or Church here upon earth—and if one individual sin the whole society partakes of the guilt of that sin, for we are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

On the morrow Joshua assembled the tribes, and by means of the sacred lot the crime was traced to Achan, the son of Carmi, who confessed to have taken and hidden "a goodly Babylonish garment and two hundred shekels of silver": "and, behold," he said, "they are hidden in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." It was because of Achan's sin that Israel turned their backs before their enemies. If, therefore, they were to have again God's blessing and protection, the evil thing must be got rid of, and Israel must put away from among them the wicked person. And this was done by the immediate destruction of Achan and all his household. Then Joshua was again assured of God's help against the enemy. "Fear not, neither be dismayed; take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the King of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land. And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst to Jericho and her king." The sin of Israel having been put away, Ai fell at once before Joshua and his warriors. Five thousand men were placed in ambush behind the city, while those who advanced to the assault feigned a retreat and were pursued by the men of Ai. Then the concealed Israelites rushed into the defenceless city and set it on fire, and the men who had followed the

retreating Israelites looked back to behold the smoke of its burning. So Ai was taken and burnt, and all its inhabitants were destroyed.

In this account of the sin of Achan, the repulse of the Israelites before Ai, and the subsequent taking of that city, we are taught that though sin in God's people may hinder the fulfilment of God's promises, and bring with it the severest chastisements, yet when that sin is repented of and forsaken, God's promised help is again assured to us.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXXIX.

*Question.* When the kings of the country near the sea on the other side Jordan heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the river before the Israelites, was their courage greatly damped?

*Q.* What means were the Israelites to use to take Jericho?

*Q.* What happened when the Israelites raised a great shout?

*Q.* What was done to the inhabitants of Jericho?

*Q.* Were God's promises of help to the Israelites unconditional?

*Q.* Did any instance occur to show that God's promises were conditional?

*Q.* What does the story of Achan teach us?

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### LESSON XL.

Joshua and the Israelites at Shechem—Solemn ratification of the covenant—Deceit of the Gibeonites—Defeat of the Canaanites at Beth-horon—The Israelites take every city from Kadesh-barnea to Esdraelon.

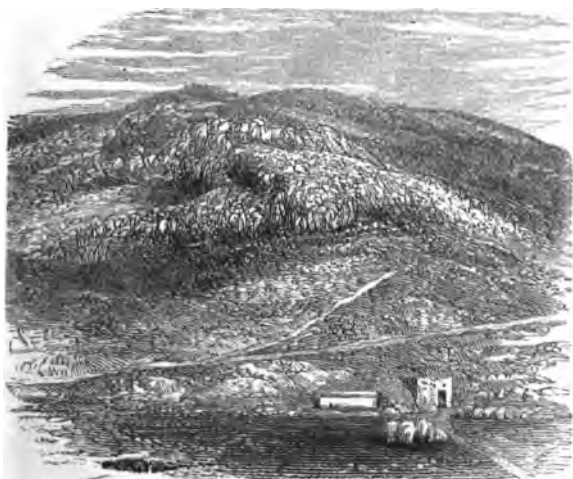
*Read Josh. viii. 30—35, ix., x.*

If we could look back and behold what took place at this time in the land of Canaan, we should have a very wonderful and striking picture before us. The successes of the Israelites in the valley of the Jordan opened to them the central parts of the country, and whilst the terror of these conquests was at its height, Joshua hastened to fulfil the command of Moses that he should build an altar to the Lord in Mount Ebal at Shechem, and there charge the people to obey the voice of the Lord, and do His commandments and His statutes. So Joshua and the Israelites went to Shechem, and in the very place where Abraham had built an altar to God, and where God had appeared to him and promised to give the land to him and to his seed—where Jacob likewise on his return from Padan-aram had raised an altar to the God of Israel—there Joshua set up his altar, and solemnly bound the whole people to keep the covenant of God and to obey His voice. Here were assembled the twelve tribes of Israel, six on Mount Ebal and six on Mount Gerizim,\* while in

\* On Mount Ebal were the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali; on Mount Gerizim the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin.

the valley between stood the priests and Levites with the ark; and here, too, was Joshua with the elders and officers of the people. The Levites read out the law, the curses of which were distinctly accepted by a loud "Amen" from the six tribes stationed on the barren and desolate Mount Ebal, while the blessings were echoed back by the six tribes that crowded the heights of the luxuriant and beautiful Mount Gerizim, each mount being a fitting emblem—the one of blasting, barrenness, and death, the other of hope, happiness, and prosperity.

The next important place that lay open to the attack of the Israelites was the royal city of Gibeon, which occupied a strong position on a mountain pass that was the high-road to the



MOUNT EBAL.

level country bordering on the sea. Now the men of Gibeon, warned by the fate of Jericho and Ai, and seeing that neither courage nor strength could avail anything against the people who smote their enemies in the name of their God, the God of Israel, resolved, if possible, to save their lives by craft. So they dissembled with the Israelites, and coming to them to Gilgal, under the guise of wayfarers from a far country, begged Joshua and the elders of Israel to make a peace with them. Their travel-stained appearance and the state of their provisions seeming to confirm their story, Joshua and the princes of Israel made with these strangers a treaty of peace and amity, but without asking counsel of God. When too late the Israelites discovered the deception; but for the sake of their



oath and the solemn engagements they had made in the name of the God of Israel, they held their treaty to be sacred. "Their princes said unto all the congregation" (who had murmured against them), "We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel; now, therefore, we may not touch them. This we will do to them; we will even let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation." So Joshua made them hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altars of the Lord. Thus reduced to perpetual servitude, the Gibeonites and their descendants were appointed to wait upon the service of the



SHECHEM.

sanctuary, and so, being dedicated to God, they lived henceforth under His protection.

The kings of the Canaanites had so far contended singly with the Israelites, but now a league was formed against them by five of these chiefs or kings of the Amorites—Adonibezek, the King of Jebus or Jerusalem, the King of Hebron, the King of Jarmuth, the King of Lachish, and the King of Eglon; and they went up against Gibeon and laid siege to it because it had made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel. But the Gibeonites claimed the protection of the Israelites, and sent unto

Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, saying, "Slack not thy hand from thy servants ; come up quickly, and save us, and help us ; for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us." Then Joshua made a rapid night march, and falling suddenly on the Amorites, defeated them with great slaughter at Beth-horon, while God thundered out of heaven, and cast down upon them great hailstones, so that they were more who died with the hailstones than they whom the children slew with the sword ; and in answer to the prayer of Joshua the sun hastened not to go down till the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. This great battle of Beth-horon has been called one of the decisive battles of the world, and it was a very notable one in the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites. City after city over the whole centre and south of the country fell before them, and Joshua dragged forth the five kings of the Amorites from a cave in the plain of Makkedah, where they had hidden themselves, and slew them, and then he hanged them on five trees until the evening. After this, city after city fell into the hands of the conquering Israelites, and they destroyed them utterly, with their inhabitants, as God commanded them.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XL.

*Question.* What striking scene took place at Shechem after the taking of Ai ?

- Q.* How was the Law solemnly ratified ?
- Q.* What part did the people take in this solemn service ?
- Q.* By what stratagem did the Gibeonites save their lives ?
- Q.* When the Israelites discovered the deception of the Gibeonites, did they break the treaty they had made ?
- Q.* What did Joshua do with the Gibeonites ?
- Q.* What kings of the Amorites now made a league against the Israelites ?
- Q.* To what city did they lay siege ?
- Q.* What did the Gibeonites do ?
- Q.* Did Joshua attend to their request ?
- Q.* Where was the great and decisive battle fought ?
- Q.* In what visible way did God fight against the Amorites ?
- Q.* In what other way did God help the Israelites in this battle ?
- Q.* What has the battle of Beth-horon been called ?
- Q.* What became of the five kings of the Amorites ?
- Q.* Did other successes follow the battle of Beth-horon ?

#### LESSON XLI.

Defeat of Hazor, and other kings of Canaan, at the waters of Merom—  
The war of conquest ceases—Joshua divides the land amongst the tribes of Israel.

*Read Josh. xi., xiv. 1—5.*

At last a chieftain in the north of the country—Jabin, King of Hazor—determined to unite in one great league all the remaining

kings of Canaan, that they might by their combined strength defeat the Israelites, and drive them out of the country. So they assembled their fighting men, their horses, and their chariots, a very great multitude, like the sand of the seashore for number, at the waters of Merom, to fight against the victorious invaders. But the Lord said to Joshua, "Be not afraid because of them, for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel." Thus encouraged, Joshua fell suddenly upon the Canaanitish host and smote them till he left none remaining. After this he took Hazor and burnt it, and slew Jabin its king, and the kings who were confederate with him. So "Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war." \*

After seven years, however, when the war ceased, the conquest was by no means complete. Many Canaanites remained on Jewish soil, and were from time to time the source of the greatest trouble to God's chosen people, who had now become the rightful possessors of the country. But the Israelites had grown weary of fighting, and longed for a time of peace in which they might enjoy the rewards of victory; and the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh were impatient to return to their families, and the lands of their inheritance on the eastern side of Jordan. During the campaign of seven years thirty-one kings of cities had fallen, and seven nations—the Canaanites proper, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Girgashites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites—were conquered, but not completely rooted out. Many Canaanites still dwelt in the land that was, by God's promise and gift, the inheritance of the Israelites; so that the war for the possession of the country was not really ended by the entire subjugation of its inhabitants. It was only suspended by the impatience of the Israelites to enjoy that which could only be lasting when the commands of God for the extirpation of the heathen people of the land had been fully carried out. And so, like a smothered fire, it broke out here and there with more or less fury for many a year. Joshua was now old and well stricken in years, but his labours were not over, for with the termination of the war came the necessity for portioning out the Land of Promise amongst the tribes of Israel. And this Joshua was to do by God's express command, for the Lord said to him, "Now, therefore, divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half-tribe of Manasseh." So Joshua divided the land by lot amongst the several tribes, but he did not make it a matter of mere

\* Josh. xi. 23.

worldly business. He gave it a sacred and religious meaning by making Eleazar the High Priest his partner in the work (together with the elders of Israel), dividing the inheritance by lot "in Shiloh before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

The southern border land of Canaan fell to Simeon. Next came the inheritance of the great tribe of Judah—the tribe that became in the course of time the most important of all the tribes. Judæa was well clothed with vineyards, and so was a fitting portion for him of whom Jacob had prophesied as "binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine." Benjamin came next to Judah, and finally became united to it. To Dan was allotted a district on the sea-coast, and to this was added a tract of land at the foot of Lebanon, in the extreme north. The central portion of the country was assigned to Ephraim, Issachar, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; while Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali divided the north. The portions of Reuben, Gad, and the other half of Manasseh were, as we have seen, the rich pasture lands of Gilead and Bashan, on the eastern side of the Jordan, and thither they returned after loyally helping their brethren in the conquest of the country.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XLI.

*Question.* Who at last united all the remaining kings of Canaan in one great league against the Israelites?

*Q.* Where did the confederate kings assemble their forces, and what was their success?

*Q.* How long did the war of the Israelites against the Canaanites last?

*Q.* What was the result of the campaign?

*Q.* How was the land apportioned to the several tribes?

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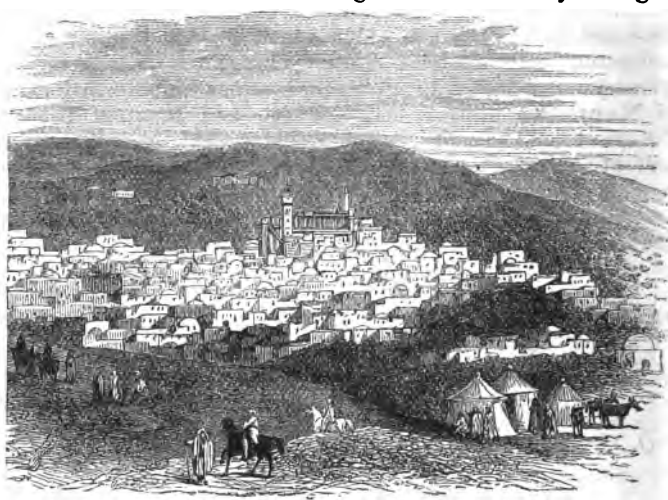
#### LESSON XLII.

Special grant to Caleb—Joshua's solemn exhortation to Israel—Death of Joshua—Joshua a type of Christ.

*Read Josh. xiv. 6—15—xxiv.*

GOD, as we have seen, commanded Joshua to apportion the country amongst the tribes of Israel, and he did so; but much of it was still in the possession of the Canaanites, and it had to be conquered before it could be appropriated. The portioning out of the land was done mostly by lot, but in some cases special grants were given as rewards for special services, or they were assigned to those who were able and willing to undertake their conquest on their own account. Of this nature was the grant of Hebron to the veteran Caleb.

Caleb reminded Joshua of the promise made to him forty-five years before, when the Lord sent him from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and he and Joshua brought a good report of it when the other ten spies caused the heart of the people to melt; and how Moses sware, saying, "Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever." "And now, therefore," said Caleb, "give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said." Caleb's faith had remained as vigorous as his bodily strength,



HEBRON.

and he desired no exemption from the work of driving the heathen people out of the land. So Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance. But it was not so with the Israelites as a people. Joshua had led them into Canaan, and under his generalship, and by the help of their Almighty Protector, they had won many battles, taken many fenced cities; and strong in the Lord and in the power of His might they could have driven the heathen people out of Canaan, as the Lord commanded them, and then each tribe might at once have taken possession of its inheritance; but they had grown weary in the work. Enriched with the spoils of victory they gave way to a spirit of sloth and self-indulgence, and they suffered the heathen people to

dwelt in the land instead of rooting them out and destroying them utterly, as the Lord commanded them. So Joshua had much to embitter his latter days. Out of the twelve tribes only five, including those settled on the eastern side of Jordan, were in possession of their inheritance, and Joshua would not again lead them forth conquering and to conquer. He had finished the special work to which God had appointed him—he had proved himself faithful in all things—and he was now old and well stricken in years. He knew that his days were numbered—that he was going the way of all the earth—and, like Moses, his last thoughts were for the people to whom he had been a king in everything but in name. So Joshua gathered Israel once more in Shechem, and reminded them of all the great things that God had done for them. And then he solemnly exhorted them to fear the Lord, and to serve Him in sincerity and in truth: “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” And the people answered, and said, “God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods.” But Joshua warned them, in words of solemn import to them and to us, to count the cost, and to consider well how awful a thing it is to make a vow to God and to enter into a covenant with Him. Yet the people repeated again, and promised for the third time, exclaiming with one voice, “Nay, but we will serve the Lord.” Then Joshua made a covenant with the people to confirm the covenant made at Sinai, and he wrote and put it with the book of the law in the ark of God, and set up a great stone under the oak or terebinth grove that was by the sanctuary of the Lord; and Joshua said to the people, “Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us, for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which He spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.” These were Joshua’s last words to Israel, and when he had spoken them he let the people depart, every man unto his own inheritance.\* Joshua, likewise, departed to his inheritance, but it was in that “better country” of which the earthly Canaan was only a type. He was a hundred and ten years old, and they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in Mount Ephraim. Joshua was a type of Christ the great Captain of our salvation. The types die because they are types; but the Divine Antitype exists for evermore, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

\* Josh. xxiv.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON XLII.

*Question.* Were there any exceptions to the assignment of land to every tribe by lot?

*Q.* Can you give an instance of this?

*Q.* What reason did Caleb give for his request that Hebron might be assigned to him?

*Q.* What were the words of Moses' promise to Joshua?

*Q.* Was Hebron in the possession of the Canaanites?

*Q.* Were the men of Israel generally equally ready to go on with the task of driving out the heathen?

*Q.* Of the twelve tribes, how many were in possession of their inheritance?

*Q.* What was the last thing that Joshua did for the benefit of Israel?

*Q.* Did Joshua accept the promise of the people to serve the Lord?

*Q.* Did Joshua live long after this?

*Q.* Who died about the same time?

*Q.* Of whom was Joshua a type?

*Q.* What did Joshua and Eleazar united typify?

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LESSON XLIII.

Government of Israelites—Book of Judges—The period of the Judges.

THE government of the Jewish or Israelitish nation was what is called a theocracy, that is to say, it was a government by the immediate direction of God. After the death of Joshua God made His will known by the high priest, and to the elders of each tribe was entrusted the civil government of their tribe.

While the generation lasted who had known Joshua, and fought with him, and been witnesses of all the wonders that God had wrought for His people, the Israelites served the Lord and were faithful to Him; but they had been slack in driving out and destroying the heathen people of the land, as the Lord commanded them, and their children reaped the bitter fruits of their fathers' transgression. Joshua had warned them not to cleave to the remnant of the nations of Canaan, and not to make marriages with them, for in that case the Lord would no more drive out these nations; "But," Joshua said, "they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you." And this was just what happened. The Israelites transgressed the commandment, and incurred the penalty. Most of the tribes allowed the Canaanites to dwell in their territories on payment of tribute, and so they became "snares and traps to them." The Israelites attended their gay and idolatrous festivals, and

wandered into their sacred groves. Intermarriages became frequent, and so God's people mingled with the heathen, and, as a natural consequence, learned their ways. Then followed apostasy, weakness, and servitude. The Israelites were oppressed and brought into bondage by the people whom they had spared; but when they repented and cried unto the Lord He raised up deliverers for them. These men were called "Judges." They were specially prepared for their work by the Spirit of the Lord, and the history of the Israelites during the period of the Judges is a record of backslidings and chastisements, of idolatry, crime, and apostasy, of oppression by heathen races, of deliverances by men raised up by God for the express purpose of avenging His people. They triumphed by unwavering faith, and their deeds teach us the power and greatness of faith. The Book of Judges is not so much a continuous narrative as a number of detached stories of the heroic age of the Israelites—the exploits of twelve or fourteen deliverers, who in different parts of the country, and as the champions of different tribes, smote the enemies of God's people, and were instruments in God's hands for effecting His purposes, and saving the Israelites from utter ruin. This is just what we are told in a few words in the Book of Judges.

For some time after the death of Joshua the Israelites carried on the task of subjugating the Canaanites. But when the men of that generation were gathered to their fathers, another arose which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel: "And they did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtoreth. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them; they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve



them, and to bow down unto them ; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.” \*

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XLIII.

- Question.* In what way was the Israelitish nation governed ?  
*Q.* After the death of Joshua how did God make His will known ?  
*Q.* Who carried on the civil government of each tribe ?  
*Q.* How long after Joshua's death did the Israelites remain faithful to God ?  
*Q.* What did Joshua warn the Israelites against ?  
*Q.* If they did not attend to the warning, what would be the penalty ?  
*Q.* Did the Israelites fall into this snare and incur the penalty ?  
*Q.* When they cried to God for deliverance did He have mercy upon them ?  
*Q.* What does the Book of Judges relate ?

### LESSON XLIV.

God's main design in His dealings with the Israelites—Its typical and spiritual meaning—Oppression of Chushan-rishathaim—Othniel—Oppression of Eglon—Ehud—Oppression of Jabin—Deborah and Barak—Battle of Esdraelon.

*Read Judges i.—v.*

IN reading the history of the chosen people—the elect nation of the Israelites—we must ever keep in mind that the record of facts is of less importance than their spiritual meaning. The one is mere history, the other is nothing less than revelation. It is interesting to know particulars of the lives of the patriarchs. How Abraham walked with God, how Isaac offered himself a willing sacrifice, how Jacob wrestled with the angel and prevailed against him, and how the family of Jacob became a nation, and how, after a cruel bondage in Egypt, and long and grievous wanderings in the desert, that nation possessed the Land of Promise. But the typical and spiritual meaning of this is of far higher importance, and, after all, chiefly concerns us, and if we study it aright we shall see that God's main design, in all and through all, was to keep alive the hope and expectation of a Messiah, and gradually to reveal more and more about His work and Person ; and almost everything in the history of the Israelites is typical of the spiritual Israel—the members of Christ's Church, and their spiritual life.

God had brought the Israelites into Canaan, and they were now on trial ; and God suffered a remnant of the heathen nations to dwell in the land to test His people—to see whether they would mingle with them and serve their gods, or whether they would serve the Lord. So Christ's people, who have been brought into His Church, are on trial. If they remain faithful

\* Judges ii. 7—19.

to Christ, and fight against their spiritual enemies, it will be well with them ; but if they are drawn away by their own lusts, and enticed, and fail to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, their spiritual enemies will prevail against them and bring them into bondage.

The first foreigner who made war against the Israelites was Chushan-rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia, who, pushing his conquests as far as the Jordan, aimed at the subjugation of the Israelites ; and they served him for a period of eight years. Then, in answer to the cry of His people, God raised up as Judge and Deliverer Othniel, the nephew of Caleb. He freed the Israelites from the yoke of the Mesopotamian, and the land had rest forty years.

But the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and punishment swiftly followed. Eglon, King of Moab, was permitted to oppress, "because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord." So surely did national calamity follow national sin. The King of Moab, having made a league with the Ammonites and Amalekites, invaded the land of Israel, established himself at Jericho, and imposed his yoke on the people of the tribe of Benjamin, who for eighteen years sent an annual tribute to Eglon to Jericho. But at last Ehud, the son of Gera, a Benjamite, became the avenger of his brethren. After paying Eglon his tribute he pretended he had a secret message to deliver to him, but as soon as he was left alone with the king he stabbed him, and succeeded in making his escape to the mountains of Ephraim. Then, blowing his horn, he gave the signal to his people to rise against their oppressors. His summons was obeyed, and at the fords of the Jordan the Israelites slew more than 10,000 of the panic-stricken and flying Moabites ; and so "the land had rest" for eighty years.

Do we ask how we are to judge of this act of Ehud, which in these days, and according to the higher law of morality revealed by Christ, would be regarded as the crime of assassination ? It is possible that God had commanded Ehud to destroy the heathen oppressor of His people ; at any rate, he acted according to the maxim of his time and country, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy."

Again, after the death of Ehud, "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord," and this time they were brought into subjection to Jabin, a king of Northern Canaan who reigned in Hazor. He "mightily oppressed the children of Israel," and held in cruel bondage the northern tribes of Asher, Naphtali, and Zebulun. Except within the walled towns, there was no security for life or property ; the highways were deserted, travellers walked through byways, the inhabitants of the villages

ceased, and the unarmed Israelites lay at the mercy of the foe. In this sad case they had but one weapon and one refuge, and that was prayer : they cried unto the Lord.

At this time a prophetess named Deborah dwelt in a tent under a palm-tree between Ramah and Bethel, in the mountain range of Ephraim. Her spirit was deeply grieved by the misfortunes of her people, and, under the inspiration of God, she was the means of delivering them from the oppression of the Canaanites. She appealed to Barak, of Kedesh-Naphtali (a general whom God raised up to be a judge and deliverer under the direction of Deborah), and told him to gather together on Mount Tabor 10,000 men of Naphtali and Zebulun, promising to deliver Jabin's army and its general, Sisera, into his hand. Barak stipulated that Deborah should go with him, thinking, it is likely, that the prophetess would inspire his men with some of the courage and faith in God's help that she herself possessed. Deborah consented to go with Barak, but warned him that it would not be for his own honour. That as he desired the help of a woman, into the hands of a woman and not into his own hands would his enemy, Sisera, be delivered. Barak and his little army set out full of confidence when they heard the words of Deborah, for they knew that God was with them. "Up," said Deborah; "for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand : is not the Lord gone out before thee?" Then, at early morning, Barak and his men marched hastily from Mount Tabor, and surprised Jabin's renowned general, Sisera, who had pushed on his army from the stronghold where he dwelt, Harosheth, on the Kishon, and encamped on the plain of Esdraelon or Jezreel, near Megiddo. The sudden onslaught of the Israelites took Sisera and his still slumbering army completely by surprise, and threw them into utter confusion, and this was increased by a terrible storm of sleet and hail that drove right in the faces of the discomfited Canaanitish host. They retreated panic-stricken to the stronghold of Harosheth before the victorious Barak. Great numbers were slaughtered by the Israelites, and many more perished in the swollen waters of the Kishon as they rushed through the narrow pass of Harosheth. Thus by the great battle of Esdraelon the great army of Jabin was utterly destroyed, for we are told "all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword ; there was not a man left." And the Israelites had rest for forty years. Nor did Sisera himself escape. He fled for safety to Heber the Kenite, who had separated himself from his tribe, and made a treaty of peace with Jabin ; so Jabin's renowned general reckoned upon his protection. Jael, the wife of Heber, invited him to repose in her tent. "Turn in, my lord," she

said, "turn in to me; fear not"; but while he slept she drove a tent-pin into his temples. Then she went to meet Barak, who was in pursuit of Sisera, and showed him how God had delivered Sisera into the hands of a woman.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XLIV.

*Question.* In reading the history of God's chosen people, the Israelites, what should we ever keep in mind?

*Q.* And what shall we find to have been God's main purpose in it?

*Q.* Of what is the history of the Israelites typical?

*Q.* Why did God suffer a remnant of the heathen nations to dwell in the land of Canaan after the Israelites had come into it?

*Q.* What foreigner first made war against the Israelites, and how long did he oppress them?

*Q.* Then, in answer to the cry of His people, who did God raise up as judge and deliverer?

*Q.* Who was the next oppressor of the Israelites?

*Q.* Who was their avenger, and how did he accomplish his purpose?

*Q.* How are we to judge Ehud with reference to the assassination of Eglon?

*Q.* What higher justification may there be in this case?

*Q.* By whom were the Israelites next brought into subjection?

*Q.* To what state was the country reduced?

*Q.* When the Israelites cried to God did He hear them, and by whom was their deliverance accomplished?

#### LESSON XLV.

The Israelites in Canaan—The house of Joseph—Gideon and the Midianites—Defeat of the Midianites.

*Read Judges vi.—viii.*

THE history of the Israelites is almost throughout the history of the same sins followed by the same chastisements. They served God for a time, and then they entered into friendly relationships with the Canaanites who still dwelt in the land. So little by little they became mingled with the heathen, and not only adopted many of their customs, but even worshipped their gods. All this was the direct and natural consequence of their disobedience in not rooting out the heathen inhabitants of the country, as the Lord commanded them, and their conduct with its results was set forth in brief but forcible language by one of their own inspired poets: "They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them: but were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works," &c.\*

The next oppression of which we read in the Book of Judges fell upon the centre of the land, the inheritance of the house

\* See Ps. cvi. 34—45.

of Joseph ; but the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were not amongst the other tribes what Joseph had been amongst his brethren. They did not inherit the virtues of their ancestor, for they were never remarkable for the fear of God and a sense of duty. On the contrary, they were jealous, rebellious, prone to idolatry and to intercourse with foreigners, and this was especially true of Ephraim. After the death of Solomon they formed a part of the kingdom of Israel ; and by casting in their lot with a rebellious and schismatical state they disappeared with the other tribes that formed a part of it. At the time of which we are speaking, the worship of Baal was openly practised by the tribe of Manasseh ; and Joash, a man descended from one of the princely families of Manasseh, had built an altar to the sun-god. Yet his son Gideon was raised up to deliver Israel from the Midianites, whom God had used for the chastisement of His backsliding people. Every year the Midianites and other desert tribes from beyond the Jordan swarmed like locusts into central Palestine, and sweeping off the crops, as well as the cattle, sheep, and asses, left the land bare and desolate. The Israelites, unable to stand against them, took refuge in the strongholds of the mountains—the caves and tombs that abounded in the limestone rocks of the country. This went on for seven years, until the Israelites, humbled and penitent, cried unto the Lord, and He hearkened unto them. At Ophrah, in Western Manasseh, as Gideon, the son of Joash, threshed wheat in a secret place for fear of the Midianites, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, and addressed him with the encouraging words, “The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.” But Gideon asked how this could be, seeing the evil case of his country and his people. “Oh, my Lord,” said Gideon, “if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?” In times past God mightily delivered His people ; but where now be all His miracles ? “The Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.” Yes, that was true, but Gideon was to have faith in God. “Thou shalt save Israel ; have not I sent thee ?” And the Lord (for it was no mere angel, but, as we may believe, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity) looked upon Gideon. His offering, too, was accepted, and the words of his commission, “Have not I sent thee ?” were plain and unmistakable. If Gideon asked for a sign we may be sure it was not as a proof of God’s power, but as an assurance that what he had seen and heard were realities, and no mere dream of the imagination. And the sign was granted, not only once but twice. First, the fleece of wool was wet with dew, while all the earth around it was dry. Then the fleece was dry, while dew lay upon the ground on every side of it. At God’s command Gideon

cast down the altar of Baal that his father had built, thus purging his home of idolatry ; and when the men of the city demanded that Gideon should be brought out and put to death, Joash answered, "Will ye plead for Baal? Will ye save him? Any one who takes the part of Baal shall be put to death ; let us wait till to-morrow and see what happens. If he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar."\* Gideon next sent messengers to the neighbouring tribes, asking their aid against the common enemy ; and in a short time he encamped on Mount Gilboa with an army of 32,000 men. But it must be clearly seen that the victory was not to be obtained by might or by numbers, but by *the sword of the Lord and of Gideon*. Only a chosen band of 300 were to go forward with their leader, for was he not called of God, and endowed with the Spirit of God? And they believed the words of their captain when he said, "Arise ; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian." Each man carried a trumpet, a pitcher, and a torch concealed in the pitcher, and with his eyes fixed upon Gideon he was prepared to follow his example. The 300 Israelites divided into three companies surrounded the camp of the slumbering Midianites, the signal was given, the Midianites, awakened by the blowing of 300 trumpets, the crash of 300 pitchers, and the blaze of 300 torches, were panic-stricken, and supposing themselves to be attacked by an overwhelming army, fled in utter confusion towards the Jordan, and throughout all the host every man's sword was turned against his fellow. The Ephraimites following after them slew the princes Oreb and Zeeb. At the fords of the Jordan the two kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, crossed over with a large part of their army, pursued by Gideon and his 300 men. The slaughter of the Midianites was immense. Zebah and Zalmunna were taken, and Gideon slew them with his own sword as the murderers of his brethren. After this signal defeat the Midianites ceased to trouble the Israelites, and the land had rest forty years. The men of Israel would have chosen Gideon to be their king because he had delivered them out of the hand of Midian ; but he reminded them that the Lord was their King. "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you ; the Lord shall rule over you." As long as Gideon lived the children of Israel worshipped the Lord, but after his death they turned again, and went a whoring after Baal, and made Baal-berith (Lord of the Covenant) their god ; and they showed no kindness to the descendants of Gideon, though he had done such great things for them.

\* From this Gideon was called Jerubbaal, or, Let Baal plead.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON XLV.

*Question.* After the deliverance of the northern tribes from the tyranny of Jabin, on what part of the land did the next oppression fall?

*Q.* By what tribe was the worship of Baal especially practised at this time?

*Q.* What people did God now use for the chastisement of His back-sliding people?

*Q.* Whom did God raise up as a deliverer?

*Q.* What signs did the Lord vouchsafe to Gideon as a proof that He had really spoken to him and appointed him to be the deliverer of His people?

*Q.* How did Gideon get the better of the Midianites, and destroy them?

*Q.* How long a rest did Gideon's victory give to the Israelites?

*Q.* What offer did the men of Israel make Gideon?

*Q.* Did he consent to rule over them, and what was his answer?

## LESSON XLVI.

Gideon's son Abimelech made King of Shechem—His death—Abimelech a type of Antichrist—Oppression of the Ammonites—Jephthah and the elders of Gilead—Jephthah defeats the Ammonites—Jealousy of the Ephraimites—Jephthah's rash vow—Jephthah's daughter a type of Christ.

*Read Judges ix.*

AFTER Gideon's death, his son Abimelech, whose mother had been a slave in Shechem, conspired with his mother's kindred to get the kingly crown that his father had refused. With the help of a number of hired assassins he seized his brethren—the seventy sons of Gideon—and slew them all except Jotham, the youngest, who escaped. Then he persuaded the men of Shechem to make him their king. Jotham, from some rocky height of Mount Gerizim overlooking the town, reproached them for this in the parable of the trees and their bramble king. The olive, the vine, and the fig refused to be king over the trees, but the worthless bramble complied at once with the request. After three years and a-half the Shechemites tired of their king and rebelled against him. Abimelech destroyed Shechem and burnt its citadel, together with all the people who had fled to it for refuge. He took the town of Thebez, and would have destroyed its citadel, but a woman cast down upon him a piece of a millstone that broke his skull. The judges were all types of Christ in some respects, but Abimelech has been regarded as a type of Antichrist; and his reign of three and a-half years agrees with the length of time during which Antichrist is to be all-powerful.

Again another apostacy of the Israelites brought down upon them once more the judgments of God. The Philistines harassed them on the south-west, while on the east the Ammonites

overran the lands of Ephraim, Judah, and Benjamin. Then the children of Israel, "sore distressed," cried unto the Lord, saying, "We have sinned against Thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim." But, as if weary of their repeated backslidings, the Lord said to them, "I delivered you . . . yet ye have forsaken Me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned; do Thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto Thee; deliver us only, we pray Thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them and served the Lord: and His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." The Lord pitied them, and in the end He helped them, and for this purpose He raised up Jephthah the Gileadite to deliver Israel.

In their distress the men of Gilead sought the help of their countryman Jephthah, who, having been unjustly expelled from his native city, had become a famous captain of freebooters, and he was also a mighty man of valour. But he said to the elders of Gilead who came to ask his aid: "Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house, and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?" But when they promised to make him "head over all the inhabitants of Gilead," he said, "If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The Lord be witness between us if we do not so according to thy words." Less patriotic and more ambitious than Gideon, Jephthah thus made his aid a matter of bargain. He would help his countrymen; but if he succeeded in his enterprise they were to make him ruler of the land of Gilead—this was to be the condition of his services. The agreement being solemnly made before the Lord, Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them. Yet Jephthah made God his trust, and was ready to give Him all the glory of victory. His words were, if "the Lord deliver them before me"; and when made "head and captain," he uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh, not lightly, but solemnly, as in the presence of God. First he tried peaceable measures with the King of Ammon, and sent messengers to him; but the King of Ammon demanded nothing less than the surrender of all the land that the Israelites had won from the Ammonites when they first came into the country. Then, as his efforts after peace were to no purpose, Jephthah prepared for war, and "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him"; and thus



he was made a divinely-appointed judge and captain of Israel. So Jephthah, as the champion of the eastern tribes, and with their aid only, took the field against the Ammonites, "and the Lord delivered them into his hands, and he smote them with a very great slaughter."

After this great victory the jealousy of the Ephraimites again showed itself, and this time very much to the cost of the tribe. The Ephraimites upbraided Jephthah with not having summoned them to the conflict (though they had been summoned), and they taunted the men of Gilead with being fugitive Ephraimites. This led to a war between the tribes, and to the destruction of more than half the tribe.

For six years longer Jephthah lived to judge the people of his own country; but they must have been greatly saddened by the consequences of a rash vow that he made to God when going forth to war against the Ammonites. "If," he said, "Thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." And lo! his daughter came out to meet him—his only child; besides her, he had neither son nor daughter. And when he saw her he could only exclaim, "Alas, my daughter!" while she answered in meek submission, "Do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth." And there seems every reason to believe that Jephthah did really sacrifice his daughter, and offered her up as a burnt-offering. As an innocent and consenting victim she was, doubtless, a personal type of Christ's surrender of Himself to the death of the cross; and such a one was needed to complete the series of types that set forth the many aspects of the one great Sacrifice.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XLVI.

*Question.* After Gideon's death did any of his sons seek to gain the crown that his father had refused?

*Q.* What means did Abimelech use to gain his ends, and what was his success?

*Q.* Of whom is Abimelech considered to be a type?

*Q.* What people next disturbed the peace of the Israelites?

*Q.* And did God again have mercy upon them and deliver them?

*Q.* What tribe showed great jealousy at Jephthah's great victory over the Ammonites?

*Q.* What event saddened the rest of Jephthah's life?

*Q.* Of whom was Jephthah's daughter a type?

## LESSON XLVII.

Oppression of the Philistines—Samson and his exploits—Betrayed by Delilah—Samson's death and great destruction of the Philistines—Eli and Samuel—Eli's sons—Defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines—The Israelites bring the ark into the battle—The ark taken—The sons of Eli slain.

*Read Judges xiii.—xvi. ; Samuel iv.—vi.*

THE extermination, or rooting out, of the heathen nations of Canaan was not only a religious duty, originating in a Divine command, and essential to the highest welfare of the Israelites, but it was likewise important as a measure of worldly policy, for the Israelites could never enjoy the country in peace while those whose lands they had taken for a possession, and whose countrymen they had put to death without mercy, dwelt within its borders, ever ready to strike a blow for the recovery of their fields and vineyards and independence. Nothing, however, could have justified such a policy but the express command of God, and as regards the natives of Canaan, we are told that the measure of their iniquity was full. The most implacable enemies of the Israelites left within the boundaries of the Land of Promise and east of the Jordan were the Philistines. Their territory upon the sea-coast in the south-west corner of the country had never been wrested from them, but it was fenced in by the tribes of Simeon, Judah, and Dan. The Philistines were worshippers of Dagon the fish god, and at the time of the later judges they had reduced the southern tribes to a degrading state of bondage. They had taken away the allotment of Simeon, and the remnant of the tribe were scattered amongst their more fortunate brethren. All the best lands of the tribe of Dan had likewise been seized by this warlike people, while the Danites were driven to the hilly and more barren portions of the country. Such was the state of Southern Palestine when Samson the Danite, the most remarkable of the judges of Israel, was raised as an avenger of Israel upon the Philistines. He was to *begin* the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines, and to be endowed with more than human strength by the Spirit of God. When he grew up to manhood he married a woman of the Philistines, but at the same time he put forth his wonderful strength against them in several single-handed exploits of great difficulty and daring; and at last in revenge for a grievous wrong they had done him he smote them "hip and thigh with a great slaughter," and then fled for safety to the rock called Etam, within the limits of the tribe of Judah; and so craven-hearted had the once valiant

tribe of Judah become by reason of the oppression of the Philistines, and in such terror did they hold them, that when the Philistines demanded the surrender of Samson they seized him, bound him with cords, and delivered him into their hands ; but as the men of Philistia raised the shout of triumph, the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and with the jaw-bone of an ass he slew one thousand of them. At last, however, he fell into the snare of Delilah, a woman of the Philistines whom he visited. Bribed by her countrymen she first persuaded Samson to tell her the secret of his strength, and then betrayed him to his enemies. Through his sinful liking for this bad woman his Nazarite vow of dedication to God was broken by the cutting of his hair : God withdrew from him, and he lost that prodigious strength that the Spirit of God imparted to him. This enabled his enemies the Philistines to make him their prisoner. They did not kill him at once, that would have been too merciful ; they gratified their cruel instincts better by putting out his eyes, binding him with fetters of brass, and making him grind, as a helpless captive, in the common prison.

But though they thought him powerless, he was yet to be an instrument in the hands of God for humbling the pride and putting to shame the idolatry of the Philistines. The lords of the Philistines held a feast to celebrate the capture of Samson, and they offered a sacrifice to their god Dagon in his temple, for, they said, "Our god hath delivered our enemy into our hands." And when their hearts were merry they sent for Samson to make sport for them, while 3,000 men and women standing on the flat roof of the building gazed at him. But the triumph of the wicked often ends in their own confusion, and so it was with the Philistines in the temple of Dagon. In answer to Samson's prayer God renewed once again his strength, and grasping the two pillars that supported the building, and putting forth all his might he pulled them down, and the temple fell upon the lords of the Philistines, and all the people who had assembled in it to offer a sacrifice to their god Dagon, and to give him the glory of the capture of their enemy Samson. "So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."\*

Samson had *begun* to deliver Israel, but a more holy and God-fearing man was to succeed him as the fifteenth judge and deliverer whom God raised up to avenge His people. Samuel was the son of Hannah, the favourite wife of Elkanah, a Levite of Ramathaim-zophim, a city of Mount Ephraim, and he was given to her in answer to prayer. Hannah made a vow that if

\* Judges xvi. 30.

her prayer were heard that her son should be devoted to the service of God, and while yet a little child she took him to Shiloh, in the allotment of Ephraim, for it was the resting-place of the ark and the tabernacle. Here she presented him to Eli the high priest that he might be brought up to minister before the Lord. Eli was both ruler and judge of the central portion of the country; but though a good man he failed in his duties as the head of a family and the ruler of God's people Israel. It was a time when the people had sunk very low. They had forsaken God, and He no longer went forth with their armies, and to punish them He made their enemies to rule over them. The priests Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, profaned the national sanctuary, and the worship of Jehovah was becoming as impure as the rites of the heathen gods; it was degraded in the eyes of the people, so that "men abhorred the offering of the Lord." National disaster followed national apostasy. At Aphek, in the north of Judah, the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines with the loss of 4,000 men. But a worse calamity was to follow; instead of humbling themselves before the Lord they profanely dragged the ark of God into the field of battle, and if mere natural causes could have given victory to the Israelites they would have triumphed. The sight of the ark kindled their courage, and when they saw it they shouted with a very great shout so that the earth rang again, while the Philistines were dismayed, for they said, "God is come into the camp. Woe unto us! Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods—the Gods that smote the Egyptians?" Nevertheless, God had forsaken the Israelites, and they were smitten before the Philistines with "a very great slaughter, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen"; nor was this all, for "the ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain." The aged Eli, whose sin was that "his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not," did not survive their death; for when he heard the terrible news "Israel is fled before the Philistines; and there hath been also a great slaughter of the people; and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God is taken," he fell from his seat and his neck brake.\* Yet Eli's patience and resignation when the child Samuel was commissioned to pronounce a curse against his family were very admirable,† and at the time of his death his chief anxiety was for the ark of God. Thus the ruin of Israel seemed complete; but, lo! after seven months the Philistines sent back the ark in all haste, for they observed with increasing alarm that its presence in their country had not brought a blessing but a

\* 1 Sam. iv. 17, 18.

† 1 Sam. iii. 18.

curse ; that its track from town to town was marked by disease and calamity, while the idols of Dagon were cast down and broken without any apparent cause.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XLVII.

*Question.* Who were the most powerful enemies of the Israelites left within the Land of Promise ?

*Q.* Who was raised up at this time to help the Israelites, and in what way did he strike terror into them ?

*Q.* How at last did he fall into the power of the Philistines ?

*Q.* How on one special occasion did God enable Samson to cause the death of a great number of the Philistines and to put to shame their idolatry ?

*Q.* Who did God next raise up as a judge in Israel ?

*Q.* Who was high priest, ruler, and judge during the infancy of Samuel ?

*Q.* Was Eli a man of God, and what were his faults ?

*Q.* Was this a time of national prosperity ?

*Q.* Did the Philistines still lord it over the Israelites ?

*Q.* What did the terrible defeats of the Israelites prove ?

*Q.* What happened to Eli when he heard that the Israelites were defeated, his sons slain, and the ark of God taken ?

*Q.* What did the Philistines do with the ark ?

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### LESSON XLVIII.

**Samuel as Judge**—He calls the Israelites to repentance—He summons them to Mizpeh—Defeat of the Philistines by the Israelites—The Israelites demand a king.

*Read* 1 Sam. vii., viii.

FOR twenty years longer the Israelites suffered the oppression of the Philistines ; but when Samuel had grown to manhood he began the reformation that the Israelites so greatly needed. He called the Israelites to repentance, and the Israelites gave proof of true repentance, for they hearkened to the voice of Samuel and put away the idolatrous worship, the worship of Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only. Then Samuel summoned *all* Israel to Mizpeh. There at Mizpeh they acknowledged their transgressions—"We have sinned against the Lord"—and with prayer and fasting they entered into a solemn covenant with the Lord by sacrifice. As soon as the Philistines heard that all Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh they went up against them, and the Israelites were sore afraid ; but they had confidence in their righteous judge, and believed that his prayer would prevail much with their God, and they said to him, "Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." So Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him, and he offered a

burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord. While thus engaged the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, but God fought for them and thundered with a great thunder upon the Philistines, and they were smitten before Israel. Samuel marked this great deliverance by the stone of help which he set up as a memorial before God and to keep Israel in remembrance that it was the Lord who had saved them out of the hand of their enemies. The effect of this great victory was to put an end to the supremacy of the Philistines. They no longer prevailed against the Israelites, but were glad to make peace with them on fair terms and withdraw to their own country. Samuel continued to judge Israel, and they enjoyed a time of rest and peace. All the tribes of the south obeyed Samuel, who three times a year held solemn sessions of justice at Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh. But in the course of time Samuel grew old, and as his sons "walked not in his ways" there seemed to be no one to whom the Israelites could look as a guide, leader, and ruler of the whole nation, and all the elders of Israel said to Samuel, "Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."\* God Himself was the King of Israel, and to ask for an earthly and visible king was a rejection of Jehovah as their sovereign. "They have rejected Me," said the Lord, "that I should not reign over them." The welfare of the nation now seemed to need an earthly and visible king who should unite all the tribes of Israel in one nation, and lead them out as a united people against their enemies; but this was owing to their own departure from the statutes and commandments of the Lord their God. God commanded Samuel to grant the people their request, but to warn them of what they would suffer at the hands of an earthly king. The people, however, remained firm in desire for a visible king. "Nay," they said, "but we will have a king over us, that we may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go on before us and fight our battles." And the Lord said to Samuel, "Hearken unto their voice and make them a king."† Long ago Moses had foreseen that the Israelites would ask a king, and God had given certain rules to regulate the conduct of their king, and to secure their own well-being.‡ Their king was to be one of their own nation—an Israelite—and chosen by God. He was not to multiply horses to be used in battle, nor wives, nor silver and gold, but he must write him a copy of the law and read therein all the days of his life. From this time, likewise, the messages of God were to be delivered by the voice or writings of men—prophets—who should make known God's will and preach to the people in His name; these were the

\* 1 Sam. viii. 5. † 1 Sam. viii. 19, 22. ‡ Deut. xvii. 15—20.

"holy men of God," who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."\*

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XLVIII.

*Question.* How much longer did the Israelites suffer the oppression of the Philistines?

*Q.* What did Samuel do as soon as he became judge?

*Q.* Did the Israelites hearken to the voice of Samuel?

*Q.* What was Samuel's next measure?

*Q.* What happened while the Israelites were assembled at Mizpeh?

*Q.* What was the effect of their victory over the Philistines?

*Q.* Were the Israelites wrong in thus asking for a king?

*Q.* What did God tell Samuel to do?

*Q.* Did they remain firm in their desire to have a king?

*Q.* Had Moses left the Israelites any rules to regulate the conduct of their king, and to secure their own well-being?

*Q.* How were God's messages made known to the people of Israel from this time?

### LESSON XLIX.

Samuel anoints Saul king of Israel—Saul among the prophets—Saul defeats the Ammonites—The people assemble at Gilgal—Saul made king at Gilgal—Samuel's reproof and counsel to the Israelites—Saul's first sin—Samuel's reproof—The Philistines still oppress Israel—Jonathan seizes a garrison of the Philistines—Great defeat of the Philistines—The people save Jonathan from Saul's decree.

*Read 1 Sam. ix. 17—27, x.—xiv.*

THE future king of Israel was Saul, the son of Kish, a chieftain of the tribe of Benjamin. Searching in vain for his father's asses he came at last to Rama to ask Samuel, the prophet and seer of Rama, about them, and when they met God made it known to Samuel that this was the man He had chosen to reign over His people Israel. Samuel assured him that the asses were found, and invited him to a sacrificial feast, where he gave him the chief seat and a special portion of meat, and told him of the great honours in store for him. The next day Samuel anointed him privately to his high office in the name of the Lord, and so Saul became the Lord's anointed and a type of Christ as the Messiah or Anointed One; but before he took upon himself the kingly authority he was to be enrolled amongst the prophets and endowed with special gifts by the Spirit of God. "It shall come to pass," said Samuel, "when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them: and they shall prophesy; and the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, *and shalt be turned*

\* 2 Peter i. 21.

*into another man*" . . . . "and God gave him another heart, and all those signs came to pass that day."\*

Thus Saul was "chosen of the Lord," elected, and a new heart was given to him, and it is sad to find that in his after life he did not fulfil the promise of these early days when he too was reckoned amongst the prophets: he who had been gracious, modest, and generous, became wilful and disobedient to God's commands, and so fell away from God and lost the grace that had been so freely given to him. He could not surrender himself to God and submit wholly to Him.

But for some time all was prosperity and success. In a solemn assembly at Mizpeh, whither Samuel had once more summoned the people of Israel, the sacred lot fell upon Saul. Samuel presented him to the people and declared that there was none like him among all Israel, while the people greeted him with shouts of "God save the king!" Very soon Saul had an opportunity of proving his talents as a military leader. Nahash, King of the Ammonites, made war upon the tribes beyond the Jordan, and besieging the town of Jabesh-Gilead would only make terms with them if they consented to have their right eyes put out as a sign of subjection to make them unfit for military service. Obtaining a seven days' respite, the men of Jabesh-Gilead sent in haste for help unto all the hosts of Israel. Saul had returned to his own town of Gibeah, and hearing the lamentations of the people at the tidings brought by the messengers from Jabesh-Gilead, his anger was kindled greatly, and the Spirit of God came upon him. Quickly he summoned all Israel to the rescue, and enforced the call by a sign or token of his displeasure in case of refusal. He soon had a following of 330,000 men, and with these he fell upon the Ammonites and slew them until they were utterly defeated and dispersed. The new king's authority was thus established and all Israel rallied round him, and demanded the death of the men who had despised him; but Saul said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel."

Soon after this the people assembled in Gilgal at the call of Samuel, and there they made Saul king, while Samuel offered sacrifices and peace-offerings before the Lord, and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. But Samuel did not allow the people to depart without counsel and reproof. First he called upon them to say whether he had not judged them in righteousness, and they acknowledged the integrity and justice of his rule. Then he reminded them of all that the Lord had done for them—of all His righteous acts and

\* 1 Sam. x. 6, 9, and 10.



gracious deliverances ; and, said Samuel, "that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king, I will call unto the Lord and He shall send thunder and rain." And at the call of Samuel God caused the serene and cloudless harvest sky to become dim and to send forth thunder and rain ; and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel, and confessed that they had sinned in asking a king. Yet they were not to despair. "Fear not," said Samuel, "but fear the Lord with all your heart," and he gave them this gracious assurance, "The Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake." Samuel, too, would not cease to pray for them, and he would still teach them the good and the right way. The most formidable enemies of the Israelites were the Philistines, who still had garrisons in many parts of the land, but a united people might hope to dislodge them. Jonathan, the son of Saul, surprised the Philistine garrison of Geba and smote it with the sword, upon which the Philistines invaded the country of the Israelites with a great army of horsemen, and chariots, and foot soldiers, "as the sand which is on the sea-shore in multitude," and they encamped in Michmash. The Israelites fled in all directions, and took refuge in the caves and woods and other convenient hiding-places. Meanwhile Saul was not idle ; he mustered all his small army at Gilgal and there awaited Samuel, who was to offer solemn sacrifices and to make supplication to the Lord for Israel. But when seven days had passed and Samuel came not Saul grew impatient, for his men were fast falling away from him, and so in his wilfulness he undertook himself the priestly functions and offered sacrifice, contrary to Samuel's express command, and in violation of the Hebrew constitution. Scarcely had he offered the burnt-offering when Samuel arrived, and instead of greeting Saul with words of encouragement, sternly asked, "What hast thou done?" Saul's excuses availed not, and Samuel's words were words of rebuke and condemnation. "Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which He commanded thee ; for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people." Saul's purpose had been to encourage his men, and with this end in view he set aside God's command made known to him by His prophet. But his forces still melted away, and he forfeited God's favour ; thus his fancied wisdom was but foolishness, and this is true of all crooked policy, wilfulness, and disobedience to God's laws. The Philistines still con-

tinued to oppress Israel, and to render the people incapable of resistance they disarmed them, and took every possible means to keep them in a state of servitude. Saul held the fortress of Gibeah with about 600 men, but the Philistines triumphed everywhere, and seemed likely long to have the mastery, when Jonathan, by a daring exploit of personal bravery, rescued his countrymen from their warlike and cruel enemies. Climbing the fortified rock in company with his armour-bearer he fell upon the garrison of the Philistines at Michmash, slew twenty men, and threw their army into such confusion that when Saul, seizing his opportunity, came down suddenly upon them from the height of Gibeah with his 600 men, a panic seized the whole body of the invaders and they fled before the Israelites, who pursued their retreating enemies and slew them without mercy. Saul thought to incite the people to greater exertions and to a keener pursuit of the Philistines by requiring that no man, on pain of death, should taste food that day, so that the Israelites, faint and weary, were less able to follow up their advantage, and Saul nearly paid the penalty of the infraction of his oath with the life of his brave son. In ignorance of the command Jonathan refreshed himself with some honey he chanced upon in a wood. When Saul heard it, he said, "Thou shalt surely die, Jonathan"; but the people would not permit the sacrifice; they said, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not."\*

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XLIX.

*Question.* Who did God command Samuel to anoint as the future king of Israel?

*Q.* In what way did Saul become a type of Christ?

*Q.* Did Samuel present Saul to the people of Israel as the king that God had set over them?

*Q.* In what way did Saul show his military talents?

*Q.* What did Samuel do next to establish Saul's kingdom?

*Q.* By what sign did Samuel show the people that their wickedness had been great in asking for a king?

*Q.* What was Saul's first care on becoming king?

*Q.* Who were the most formidable enemies of the Israelites within the Jordan?

*Q.* Did war follow between the Philistines and the Israelites, and with what success?

*Q.* How were the Israelites delivered from the yoke of the Philistines?

*Q.* How were the Israelites made incapable of pressing their advantage to the utmost, and in what way did Jonathan nearly lose his life?

## LESSON L.

Conquests and prosperity of Saul—Saul's disobedience—David the King elect—David slays Goliath of Gath.

*Read 1 Sam. xv.—xvii.*

SAUL not only triumphed over the Philistines (although there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul), but as ruler of the whole country he led a united people to the conquest of their enemies on every side. Moab, Edom, Ammon, and Amalek, were all subdued, and during many years of prosperity Saul reigned with a splendour and success that raised his kingdom to the foremost rank amongst eastern monarchies; and had he learnt, not only the maxims of worldly policy, but the more difficult lessons of obedience to Him from whom he derived his authority—of gratitude to that God who had so highly exalted him—his throne would have been established in righteousness. Failing this, his prosperity had no root, and by-and-by, like a goodly plant upon rocky ground, it withered away. Whenever Saul had to make a choice between obeying God and acting upon his own inclination, his impatience and self-will seemed to blind him to his higher duties. He thought only of mere self-pleasing, and he sought the praise of men rather than the approval of God. Yet Saul possessed every advantage. For the greater part of his reign he had Samuel for a guide and counsellor, and from that holy prophet and man of God he might ever learn the will of God. His disobedience, therefore, had never the excuse of ignorance. It was wilful, deliberate, and in direct opposition to the plainest and most unmistakable commands. The Amalekites of the desert were a fierce marauding tribe—a people addicted to pillage and massacre, and from the time when Israel fought with Amalek in Rephidim,\* they had harassed the Israelites on their southern border, or added their strength to the armies of the Philistines. Moreover, God had said, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, and the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." The time had now come for God to make good His word, and He spoke to Saul by the mouth of Samuel, saying, "I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not." It was a war of extermination: a "putting out of the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." Even the sheep and cattle, camels and asses,

\* See Ex. xvii. 8—16.

were to be destroyed lest any remnant that might escape should still harbour near the Israelitish frontier. But Saul did not obey the command of the Lord, but "spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord." Samuel's stern rebuke showed Saul that his conduct was sheer rebellion against the Lord, nor did his excuses, "*the people spared them*" (thus he threw the blame on others), and from so good a motive (to sacrifice them unto the Lord), avail him in the least. To obey was better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. Then Saul's conscience seemed touched, and he confessed that he had "transgressed the commandment of the Lord"; but still he had an excuse. It was because he feared the people. His repentance was not a sincere and godly sorrow for sin, but a fear rather of its consequences; so his repentance was not acceptable to God. And Samuel could speak no word of consolation. His language was still the language of reproof: "Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and in judgment the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." But though Samuel would no longer hold friendly intercourse with Saul, yet he mourned for him.

From this time to the day of his death the history of Saul is a sad one; for inasmuch as he gave himself up, we may believe, to a rebellious spirit, "the Spirit of the Lord departed from him," and an evil spirit from the Lord—a spirit more in agreement with the temper he cherished—troubled him. His better feelings seem to have been extinguished one by one, and he became a jealous and capricious tyrant.

Samuel was still mourning for Saul when God summoned him to new duties. He was told to go to Bethlehem, and there to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, as the future King of Israel. Samuel was attracted by the handsome face and noble stature of Eliab, and forgetting how grievously Saul had disappointed any expectations that may have been founded on such merely exterior advantages, he said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before me." And God's answer warned him against putting too much trust in outward appearances. God said, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."\* Seven sons of Jesse passed successively before Samuel, but none of these was the Lord's chosen one. At last came the youngest, a shepherd lad, who was skilled in music, and so brave that no danger appalled him; when in the path of duty he feared no combat, however unequal it might seem. As the champion of the weak, as one who lived in the fear of the Lord, and put his

\* 1 Sam. xvi. 6, 7.

faith in the protection of his God, he feared neither lion nor bear, and he dreaded as little the gigantic heathen warrior who defied Israel and Israel's God. This youth was God's chosen one, and Samuel obeyed the Divine command, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he."\*

Meanwhile, as Saul grew more and more moody, and unlike his former self, his servants persuaded him to try the soothing effect of music on his restless and unhappy mind. David was sent for, and he quickly found favour with Saul, for he became not only Saul's minstrel, but also one of his armour-bearers. And "when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul David took an harp and played with his hand: so Saul was



DAVID PLAYING THE HARP BEFORE SAUL.

refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."† David, however, was not in constant attendance upon Saul, for we hear of him again feeding his father's sheep in Bethlehem.

David was now to win renown as the champion of his country against the Philistines. The two armies were again gathered together against each other in battle array at Shochoh, in the hilly country of Judah, near to the plain of Philistia. Suddenly a warrior, Goliath of Gath, came forth from the camp of the Philistines, and defying the armies of Israel, challenged any champion whom the Israelites might send against him, and

\* 1 Sam. xvi. 12.

† 1 Sam. xvi. 23, xvii. 15.

who dared to meet him in single combat. "When Saul and all Israel heard those words they were dismayed, and greatly afraid," for the Philistine was a man of gigantic stature—probably ten feet in height—and clad in brazen armour. But David (who had come to the camp with provisions for his brethren) said, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? I will fight with this Philistine." And when Saul heard it he said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with thee." So David went forth, assured that the Lord would deliver the Philistine into his



DAVID SLAYING GOLIATH.

hand. Putting off the armour wherewith Saul had clothed him, and taking with him five smooth stones in his shepherd's bag, and his sling in his hand, he said to the Philistine, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied"; and by the issue of the combat should all men know that there was a God in Israel. Then David smote the Philistine in his forehead with a stone from his sling, and the stone sank into his forehead and he fell upon his face to the earth. Saul promoted David to a high command in his army, but when he heard the saying of the women of

Israel, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," he became jealous of David, and eyed him, or looked on him with suspicion; and from that time his history showed but too plainly that an evil spirit was gaining the mastery over him.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON L.

*Question.* After Saul and Jonathan's defeat of the Philistines did Saul prosper?

*Q.* How at last did Saul lose entirely the favour of God?

*Q.* What was Saul's punishment?

*Q.* Did Saul's conduct improve from this time?

*Q.* What was the consequence?

*Q.* What was Samuel now directed to do?

*Q.* How did David become acquainted with Saul?

*Q.* How did David win great renown?

*Q.* What excited Saul's jealousy against David?

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### LESSON LI.

Saul tries to kill David—Then he hunts him from place to place—Saul's massacre of the priests—David takes refuge in Philistia—David will not kill Saul—The Philistines invade the land of Israel—The Israelites totally defeated at Gilboa—Saul and Jonathan slain—Saul's character.

*Read 1 Sam. xvii.—xxxi.*

FROM the time that Saul first harboured jealousy against David his temper became more and more violent, his passions less under restraint than in times past, and he gave way by turns to jealousy, injustice, and to that vindictive hatred that turned into murder and massacre. David's presence excited Saul to ungovernable fits of passion. He hurled his javelin at David as he sought to divert the king's mind by the music of his harp; twice David escaped the weapon. Saul gave him a command in the army, but he tried to make him fall by the hand of the Philistines. By a dangerous expedition against them David was to win Michal, Saul's younger daughter, in marriage, and when, instead of being cut off as Saul hoped, David only won distinction and the love of the people, he commanded Jonathan and his servants to kill him. But Jonathan loved David, and by his intercession with Saul David was received into favour. "Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan; and Saul sware, As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain; and Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past."\* But this did not last long, for when David soon added to his fame by a great victory over the

\* 1 Sam. xix. 6, 7.

Philistines, Saul's jealousy was once more aroused, and again he cast his spear at him, meaning to kill him. David's wife, Michal, saved his life by deceiving Saul's messengers by a stratagem when Saul sent them to David's house to seize him, and she let him down through a window. So David escaped, and fled to Samuel at Naioth, near Ramah. Saul sent officers to that place to take him, but when they heard Samuel and David singing their sacred songs, and prophesying, they too caught the prophetic inspiration. To other messengers the same thing happened, and when Saul himself went at last to Naioth the Spirit of God was once more upon him, and he too prophesied. But his mind received no lasting benefit, for his enmity against David was implacable, and believing that David would succeed him as king, he hunted him continually from place to place. Enraged with Jonathan for speaking once more in his favour, he said to him: "As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die."\* David became again a fugitive. At Nob, a city of priests, Abimelech the high priest, believing David to be on a mission for the king, helped him on his way, and gave him and his companions some loaves of the holy bread. Then David took refuge with Achish, the Philistine King of Gath—but when the Philistines recognised him as the champion of the Israelites, he escaped to the cave of Adullam, not very far from Bethlehem. Here, as captain of a band of warriors, he harassed the Philistines, and at Keilah, where they were robbing the threshing-floors, he smote them with a great slaughter.

Saul had now become a suspicious and merciless tyrant. Hearing that the high priest Abimelech had supplied David with bread and a sword, and being deceived by the story of the infamous Doeg, Saul summoned to him Abimelech and the priests of Nob, accused them of conspiring with his enemies, and then caused them all, fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod, to be massacred by his headsmen Doeg, an Edomite. Moreover, he smote all that were in the city of Nob—men, women, and children—with the edge of the sword. Then Saul himself set out in pursuit of David, and he hunted him from one hiding-place to another, in deserts and caves and waste places. Yet, more than once, David refused to revenge himself upon Saul, when, through the neglect of his guard, David had him in his power. He would not smite the Lord's anointed, and he could truly say, "Yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy."† Saul for a little while was smitten with

\* 1 Sam. xx. 31.

† Ps. vii. 4.



contrition, lifted up his voice and wept, acknowledging that David was more righteous than himself, and had rewarded him good for evil.\* Yet Saul's repentance was not lasting, for again he pursued after David, and again David spared the life of Saul. Then was Saul conscience-stricken, and he said, "I have sinned; return, my son David; I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly."† But David believed that Saul would still seek his life, and he again took refuge in the land of the Philistines. But the end of Saul's reign was at hand. A great host of the Philistines invaded the land of Israel, and



DAVID CUTTING SAUL'S ROBE.

when Saul beheld their mighty army he was afraid. He had lost the favour of God and the love of man. Samuel was dead. The slayer of the priests, the persecutor of David, was without help or hope. His heart trembled exceedingly, and in his distress he sought, by means of an "evil magic" and by unlawful ways, to gain that knowledge that God vouchsafed him not. And so, and by the means he had chosen, he heard his doom. God sent him a vision, and the voice of Samuel told him the fearful truth that the Lord was departed from him, and was become his enemy—that the Lord had rent the kingdom out of his hand and given it to David—

\* 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17.

† 1 Sam. xxvi. 20, 21.

that the Lord would deliver Israel and Saul and his sons into the hand of the Philistines.\* Then followed the bloody battle of Gilboa. The Israelites were totally defeated, and Saul was slain. The brave Jonathan, and all the other sons of Saul but one, fell that day in battle. Saul had thought to make sure the throne to himself, and to his posterity, by the murder of David; but the end of all his crooked policy and rejection of the word of the Lord was to be himself destroyed, and that without remedy.

In Scripture history, just as some men are bright examples of faith and holiness, others serve as beacons to warn us from the paths that lead down to the dark valley of the shadow of death; and we are to avoid their ways just as rocks and shoals are to be avoided by the mariner, or the yawning chasm by him who climbs the mountain's side. Saul is clearly of this latter class. Highly exalted by the favour of God, and endowed with the Spirit of God; possessing in Samuel a faithful friend, whose godly counsels might ever have guarded him aright, he threw away every advantage and every privilege, and in choosing to follow his own imperious will, and to gratify his own headlong impulses rather than obey the plainest commands of God, or follow the advice of His prophet, he sinned against light and knowledge. So the Lord departed from him; he not only grieved but quenched the Holy Spirit; and an evil spirit took possession of him, and controlled him. The result was utter ruin in both temporal and spiritual matters. His kingdom was rent from him, and given to another more worthy of it; and, forsaken by God and man, he perished miserably, and died without repentance and without hope, for "the Lord had become his enemy." †

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON LI.

*Question.* In what way did Saul try to bring about the death of David?

*Q.* How did David again excite Saul's jealousy?

*Q.* What was the consequence?

*Q.* Could David ever have revenged himself on Saul?

*Q.* Did David's forbearance have any good effect on Saul?

*Q.* How did Saul feel when the Philistines invaded his kingdom with a great army?

*Q.* What particular crime had Saul been guilty of?

*Q.* Did Saul conquer the great army of the Philistines that had invaded the land of Israel?

*Q.* To what class of men did Saul belong?

*Q.* Does there seem to have been any hope in Saul's death?

\* 1 Sam. xxviii. 16—19.

† 1 Sam. xxviii. 16.

## LESSON LII.

The reign of David—Anointed king over the house of Judah at Hebron—Abner makes Ish-bosheth, son of Saul, king over the rest of Israel—David becomes king of all Israel—Abner assassinated by Joab—David's grief and mourning for Abner—He makes Jerusalem his capital—Establishes the national religion—The ark brought to Jerusalem—David's conquests—David's sin—His punishment—Absalom's rebellion—Absalom's army defeated—Absalom's death.

*Read 2 Sam. i.—xiii.*

WHEN David heard the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan, and of the disastrous battle of Gilboa, his only feeling seems to have been one of real sorrow. He was a patriot, and the people of the commonwealth of Israel—the people of the Lord—had been smitten by their most implacable and cruel foe. Saul, though his enemy, was the King of Israel and the Lord's anointed, while Jonathan was his generous and loving friend. So "David, and the men that were with him, mourned, and wept, and fasted, until evening," and in a most pathetic elegy he lamented the sad fate of his "brother," and the downfall of the mighty.\*

Then, as to his present duty, David committed his way unto the Lord, and inquired of the Lord what he should do. He was to go to Hebron, and there the men of Judah anointed him king over the house of Judah. Meanwhile Abner, Saul's great military captain, made Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, king over all Israel excepting the house of Judah, and he held his court at Mahanaim, on the eastern side of Jordan; but after David had reigned seven and a-half years in Hebron, Abner deserted the weak Ish-bosheth, who had offended him, and joining David, translated the kingdom from the house of Saul and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah from Dan even to Beer-sheba. Shortly afterwards Ish-bosheth was slain by two of his officers, Baanah and Rechab, who were captains of bands; and they took his head to David, but David, far from rewarding the murderers of the last surviving son of Saul, punished them with instant death. David had now no rival, and the elders of Israel came to him to Hebron and anointed him King over Israel. David had waited upon God long and patiently, and he now had a proof of the faithfulness of God. David himself enforced the lesson in the 37th Psalm, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass . . . Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."†

\* 2 Sam. i. 19—27.

† Ps. xxxvii. 5, 7.

Abner the king-maker was, however, himself assassinated by Joab, David's most powerful follower, to avenge the death of his brother Asahel, whom Abner had slain. But David was deeply grieved, and he commanded the people to gird on sackcloth for Abner, while he followed him to the grave and mourned for him. Twice, in the valley of Rephaim, David smote the Philistines, and when by these and other victories over the enemies of Israel, as well as by his own wise administration, his rule was firmly established, he was able to bring about two measures of great national importance. First, he wrested Jebus, or Jerusalem, from the Jebusites, and made it the seat of government; and, secondly, he established the



BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM.

national religion with suitable magnificence, and prepared the way for Jerusalem—the holy city—becoming the centre of worship for all Israel. The ark was brought with great state and with great rejoicings from Kirjath Jearim to Jerusalem. David, at the head of 30,000 men, escorted it with music and sacred songs that spake of the triumph of God over His enemies, and probably the 68th Psalm was composed for that joyful occasion. And it was David's desire to build a temple for the Lord, and a resting-place for the ark of His presence. "See," said David to the prophet Nathan, "I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." But this was to be the glory of his son's reign. David was a warrior, and had shed much blood in battle, and the peaceful work of

raising the House of God was to be done by a man of peace. Nor were David's victories at an end. His kingdom was enlarged on every side to include the whole of the Promised Land, and on the east it extended to the Euphrates. He conquered the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, and, defeating the Syrians, occupied several of their fortresses. Wealth flowed into his treasury from many quarters, and nothing seemed likely to disturb the prosperity of his reign. But David was to suffer a terrible reverse, and his greatest trouble must have been the knowledge that it was the consequence and the punishment of his own sin. He had killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and taken Uriah's wife to be his wife.\* Yet when the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David with the sad story of the cruel rich man who took the poor man's lamb, and the terrible accusation, "*Thou art the man*" had been spoken, he saw at once the greatness of his crime, and the cries of anguish, the confession of guilt, and the utter self-abasement which burst from his lips in the 51st Psalm make known to us the depths of his repentance, and how truly he possessed that broken and contrite heart that God does not despise. But though God had forgiven David's sin, yet its inevitable consequences and temporal punishment made his remaining years very sorrowful. God raised up evil against him out of his own house. His favourite son Absalom rebelled against him, and raised a revolt that drove him from Jerusalem, and across the Jordan; but an army rallied round the King of Israel, and in a battle between the troops of Absalom and those of David Absalom's men were completely defeated. Absalom himself was slain as he rode away from the field of battle. His beautiful hair got entangled in the boughs of a tree, and Joab ran him through with darts, and cast his body into a pit. David's first inquiry was, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" and when he heard of his miserable end he wept, and said, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON LII.

- Question.* Was David glad when he heard of the death of Saul?  
*Q.* How did he show his sorrow?  
*Q.* Did David immediately become king of all Israel?  
*Q.* What two measures of national importance did David bring about?  
*Q.* What did David do with the ark?  
*Q.* What people did David conquer?  
*Q.* What grievous sin did David commit?  
*Q.* Did David repent of his sin very deeply and truly?  
*Q.* What punishment did God send David?

\* 2 Sam. xi., xii. 1—14.

## LESSON LIII.

David recovers his throne—Schemes of Adonijah—Solomon anointed king—Death of David—Plotting of Adonijah—Adonijah and Joab put to death—Solomon's wisdom—Glory of Solomon's reign—Dedication of the temple—Solomon's sins—Solomon's punishment.

*Read 1 Kings i.—xi.*

DAVID had sinned and his sons had committed grievous crimes. Therefore God was wroth with His anointed, and it even seemed to him that God had made void His covenant. But it was not so, for the Lord said, "If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips . . . . His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me."\* These other promises† have a prophetic meaning that no mere earthly king and no mere human descendant of David could fulfil; they could only be true of Him who would also be David's Lord, and who would be Priest as well as King. In David and in David's reign the true idea of the coming Messiah were shadowed forth by priest, by prophet, and by king more clearly than before.

David recovered his throne and all his former glory, but his troubles were not at an end. He displeased God by numbering the people, and he saw them smitten down by pestilence.‡ His eldest surviving son, Adonijah, plotted to succeed David on the throne of Israel.

David was now seventy years old, and he had reigned about forty years—seven and a half years at Hebron, and thirty-three years over all Israel at Jerusalem. Then David assembled all the princes, and captains, and great men of Israel, and told them that Solomon was God's anointed one to succeed him as their king, and that Solomon should build a house for the Lord Jehovah. And David charged Solomon in their presence that he should serve God with a perfect heart and with a willing mind. And they made Solomon king, and anointed him before the congregation of Israel, and they rejoiced, and David likewise rejoiced with great joy. Having thus seen his son Solomon anointed as God's chosen one, and accepted by all Israel as their king, David died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honours. Then, having put to death the intriguing Adonijah, Solomon began his peaceful reign, during

\* Ps. lxxxix. 30—37.

† Ps. cx.

‡ 2 Sam. xxiv.

which time every man dwelt safely under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan to Beersheba.\* God, who appeared to him in a dream at Gibeon, gave him the wisdom that he asked for, and because Solomon's choice pleased the Lord, he promised him riches and honour, for a king to judge the people with righteousness and the poor with judgment, was, thought Solomon, to establish his throne for ever.† His wisdom showed itself in *judgment*, knowledge, and government. His *judicial wisdom* was seen in the case of the two women who claimed the same child, and in assigning it to her who would rather yield it to her rival than divide it with her, and his *knowledge* of nature was very great. Solomon was to be a prince of peace, and he understood all the arts of peace, and the first of these was *government*. He divided his kingdom into twelve districts, and each had its governor, with officers under him. By his foreign treaties he preserved peace, and he entered into alliances with the King of Egypt and the King of Phœnicia. By his favour he obtained cedar wood from the forests of Lebanon for the building of the temple and skilled artisans, and in return he supplied the Tyreans with corn and oil. Commerce flourished, and Solomon had two navies, one for eastern and the other for western traffic. Wealth poured into his treasures, and his riches and magnificence became as famous as his wisdom. But the glory of Solomon's reign was to be the building of the temple. It was begun as soon as the preparations were completed, in the fourth year of his reign. It was built on Mount Moriah, on the model of the tabernacle, but it was a solid building instead of a tent. There was the inner sanctuary (divided into the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies) and the outer courts. In seven and a half years all was completed, and the solemn dedication took place with all the splendour that Solomon could command. It began with innumerable burnt-offerings. Then began the removal of the ark from the tabernacle to its resting-place in the Holy of Holies within the temple. It was borne by the Levites, chanting the 24th, 47th, 97th, 98th, and 107th Psalms. The singers, as it drew near the gate, broke out in these words: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in." It was answered from the other part of the choir, "Who is the King of glory?" The whole choir responded, "The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory." When the procession arrived at the Holy Place the gates flew open; when it reached the Holy of Holies the veil was drawn back. The ark took its place under the extended wings of the cherubim, which might seem to fold over and

\* 1 Kings iv. 20—25.

† Prov. xxix. 14.

receive it under their protection. At that instant all the trumpeters and singers were at once to make one sound, to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; "and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever, the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."\* Solomon blessed the whole congregation of Israel, and he blessed the Lord God of Israel. Then kneeling down on the brazen scaffold, he spread forth his hands towards heaven, and prayed God that His eyes might rest upon His house day and night, and that He would hearken unto the supplications of His people.† And Solomon entreated the Lord, saying, "Hear Thou from Thy dwelling-place, even from heaven; and when Thou hearest, forgive. Now therefore arise, O Lord God, unto Thy resting-place, Thou, and the ark of Thy strength; let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of Thine anointed; remember the mercies of David thy servant."‡ Then the cloud which had rested over the Holy of Holies grew brighter and more dazzling, fire broke out and consumed all the sacrifices, the priests stood without awe-struck by the unsupportable splendour, the whole people fell on their faces and worshipped; and feared the Lord, saying, "For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever."§

But though Solomon was so wise and so great, his glory was dimmed by his departure from the ways of his father David. Towards the end of his reign of forty years this was plainly seen in three different ways. His rule became a grievous yoke. || He married *many* wives, and these women were not of his own nation, but foreigners and idolators. This was contrary to God's law, and it led to idolatry. Solomon became a worshipper of their gods, and impure heathen rites were permitted if not encouraged. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, "Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept My covenant and My statutes which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant."¶ Like Saul, Solomon *disobeyed the plain commands of God*, and his punishment was likewise a forfeiture of the throne of Israel. "Yet," said God, "in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away

\* 2 Chron. v. 13, 14.  
§ 2 Chron. vii. 1-3.

† 2 Chron. vi. 12, 13.  
|| 1 Kings xi. 4-10.

‡ 2 Chron. vi. 41, 42.  
¶ 1 Kings xi. 11.





will not depart from him. Rehoboam, for when he might have won the people, he made them his servants for ever by his excessive demands, and following the advice of the elders that he should lighten the grievous yoke which his father had lately exacted from them, he refused and took the advice of the young men who were about him, and said that he would make his yoke heavier, and whereas his father had chastised the people with whips, he would chastise them with scorpions. The people of Israel raised the cry, "*To your tents, O Israel*," and every part of the nation renounced their allegiance to the house of David, and Jeroboam, the servant of the house of David, became the first king of the revolted ten tribes, and formed the kingdom of Israel, as distinguished from the kingdom of Judah. Thus Solomon's empire was broken, and the people of Israel were punished for their disobedience. They were no longer a united nation. The wrath of men against kings fulfilled the purposes and promises of God. His judgments against Solomon and bringing about the division of the kingdom were promised to Jeroboam.\* The throne of Israel and the kingdom were promised to him if he kept God's commandments, and walked in His ways; but just as at first Jeroboam was not content, like David, to wait God's time, so at the beginning of the reign of Solomon lifted his hand against the Lord, and instead of trusting God, and obeying Him in all things, he set himself against God's will at naught, and thought to establish his kingdom by his own devices.† He thought that if Jerusalem was the centre of the national worship and the national assembly, the revolted tribes would soon return to the house of David. So he made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much" (too far and too inconvenient) "for you to come up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." And he set one in Bethel and the other in Dan." Yet Ahijah the prophet had told him that Jerusalem was God's chosen city, and that there He would put His name. Thus he put up a carved figure to represent the invisible God; and to this he added other sins by ordaining things which were altogether contrary to God's law. He made priests of persons who were not of the sons of Levi, devised a dedication festival at Bethel like unto the feast that was celebrated at Solomon's dedication of the temple, and he built the altar and burnt incense. Then Jeroboam followed Jeroboam on Jeroboam, and upon the old prophet of the house of David (1 Kings xiii). The next judgment on Jeroboam

\* 1 Kings xi. 29.

† 1 Kings xii. 28—33.

all the kingdom, but will give one tribe to thy son for David My servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen."\* But unlike Saul, Solomon did not wholly depart from the ways of the Lord, only he went not fully after Him like David his father; and the prophet Nehemiah tells us that though Solomon sinned by these things, "yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God."† His last words were full of comfort, warning, and instruction: "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."‡

When Solomon had reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years he slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David, and Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his stead.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON LIII.

*Question.* Did David recover his throne?

*Q.* Did David live much longer?

*Q.* When God asked Solomon what He should give him, what choice did he make?

*Q.* And because Solomon's choice pleased the Lord, what did He promise him besides?

*Q.* In what particular manner did Solomon's wisdom show itself?

*Q.* What was the glory of Solomon's reign?

*Q.* Did Solomon follow the example of David his father to the end of his reign?

*Q.* With what punishment did God visit him?

*Q.* How was his punishment mitigated for the sake of his father David?

*Q.* Though Solomon sinned, did he, like Saul, wholly depart from God?

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#### LESSON LIV.

Rehoboam—Revolt of the ten tribes—Jeroboam—His policy—His religious schism and calf-worship—Death of his son Abijah—Ahijah denounces God's judgments on the house of Jeroboam—Jeroboam's defeat by the King of Israel—Nadab—His idolatry—He made Israel to sin—Baasha—Ēlah—Zimri—Omri.

*Read 1 Kings xii.*

SOLOMON thought that all his labour under the sun was but vanity and vexation of spirit, for he could not tell whether his successor would be a wise man or a fool—whether he would rule in the fear of God and for the good of the nation, or whether he would care only for self-gratification. Rehoboam, who reigned in his father's stead, exemplified King Solomon's lament in a remarkable manner; for his whole life was but an illustration of the proverb that though a fool should be brayed in

\* 1 Kings xi. 9—13. † Neh. xiii. 26. ‡ Eccles. xii. 13, 14.

a mortar, yet his foolishness will not depart from him. Rehoboam was a very foolish man, for when he might have won the love of his people, and made them his servants for ever by complying with their just demands, and following the advice of his wisest counsellors that he should lighten the grievous servitude that Solomon had lately exacted from them, he hearkened to his flatterers and took the advice of the young men. So he spoke roughly, and said that he would make his father's yoke heavier; and whereas his father had chastised them with whips, he would chastise them with scorpions. Instantly the men of Israel raised the cry, "*To your tents, O Israel!*" The greater part of the nation renounced their allegiance to the house of David, and Jeroboam, the servant of Solomon, became the first king of the revolted ten tribes, which henceforth formed the kingdom of Israel, as distinguished from the kingdom of Judah. Thus Solomon's empire was divided, and the people of Israel were punished for their sins by being no longer a united nation. The wrath of men and the folly of kings fulfilled the purposes and promises of God, executing His judgments against Solomon and bringing to pass His promises to Jeroboam.\* The throne of Israel and a sure house were promised to him if he kept God's commandments and walked in His ways; but just as at first Jeroboam was not content, like David, to wait God's time, but during the reign of Solomon lifted his hand against the king, so now, instead of trusting God, and obeying Him in all things, he set God's will at naught, and thought to establish his throne by his own devices.† He thought that if Jerusalem remained the centre of the national worship and the national festivals that the revolted tribes would soon return to the house of David. So he made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much" (too far and too inconvenient) "for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set one in Bethel and the other in Dan." Yet Ahijah the prophet had told him that Jerusalem was God's chosen city, and that there He would put His name. Thus he put up a carved figure to represent the invisible God; and to this he added other sins by ordaining things which were altogether contrary to God's law. He made priests of persons who were not of the sons of Levi, devised a feast or dedication festival at Bethel like unto the feast that was in Judah at Solomon's dedication of the temple, and he offered upon the altar and burnt incense. Then followed God's judgment on Jeroboam, and upon the old prophet of Bethel (see 1 Kings xiii). The next judgment on Jeroboam was

\* 1 Kings xi. 29.

† 1 Kings xii. 28—33.

God had commanded to sustain him. Miraculously again were his wants supplied, for the widow's meal diminished not, neither did her cruse of oil fail till the Lord sent rain upon the earth. Again Elijah was sent to Ahab. "Art thou," said Ahab, "he that troubleth Israel?" No, Ahab was the real troubler of Israel, in that he had forsaken the commandments of the Lord and served Baalim. And so Elijah told him, "*Thou* and thy father's house are the troublers of Israel." Then Elijah commanded the king to gather all Israel to Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal 450, and the prophets of Ashtoreth 400, that all Israel should witness the contest between the single prophet of God and the many prophets of the false



THE RAVENS BRINGING FOOD TO ELIJAH.

gods—between Jehovah and Baal. Ahab dared not refuse. Prophets and people assembled at Mount Carmel, and there, once for all, the people were to decide between God and Baal. "If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." Elijah triumphs; fire from heaven consumed his sacrifice; the false prophets were put to shame, so that the people were compelled to fall on their faces and cry, "The Lord He is God!" "The Lord He is God!" And at Elijah's command they slew the prophets of Baal at the brook Kishon. But Elijah's mission was not accomplished till by God's command he had anointed Hazael as King of Syria instead of Ben-

hadad, Jehu the King of Israel in place of Ahab, and Elisha to succeed him as prophet in Israel.\* Ahab filled up the measure of his iniquity by the murder of Naboth. In Ahab's war with Syria, the "arrow shot at a venture" at Ramoth-Gilead fulfilled God's word by the prophet Michaiah, as well as the doom of Ahab and the prediction of Elijah,† for the chariot dyed with Ahab's blood was washed in the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood.‡

Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, succeeded his father on the



ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN.

throne of Israel, and after a short and uneventful reign his brother Jehoram became the next King of Israel; and in alliance with the Kings of Judah and Edom he made war on the revolted King of Moab, and defeated him. During this reign Elisha, who, when Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire, § had succeeded him as the prophet of Israel, did many miracles. The most notable of these was the cure of the

\* 1 Kings xix. 1—18.

† 1 Kings xxii. 38.

‡ 1 Kings xxi. 19.

§ 2 Kings ii. 12.

leper Naaman, the great general of the King of Syria.\* During the reign of Jehoram Syria warred against Israel, and during the second siege of Samaria the inhabitants were reduced to the greatest extremities. But the time had come for God's judgments to be executed against the house of Ahab. Jehu was anointed by God's command to be King of Israel, and the destroyer of the house of Ahab. His arrow killed Jehoram, son of Jezebel. At Jezreel Jehu caused the wicked queen to be thrown from a window of her palace as he sat in his chariot, and then he trampled her under his horse's feet. Sons and grandsons of Ahab, and all the descendants of Ahab, he cut off without mercy, and then appointed a great festival in honour of Baal. All the worshippers of Baal, not only at Samaria, but throughout all Israel, were to be there; not one was to be absent on pain of death, for it was a solemn assembly, and Jehu had a great sacrifice to do to Baal. "Ahab," said Jehu, "served Baal a little, but I will serve him much." But he did it in subtlety, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal. For when the house of Baal was full of worshippers from one end to the other, Jehu commanded his captains to smite them, and not to let one escape. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel, and effected a religious as well as a political revolution. Jehu became king, and as a reward for so far fulfilling the commands of God, his children, to the fourth generation, were to sit on the throne of Israel. He had been very zealous in the destruction of the worship of Baal, but he did not show the like zeal in returning to the true worship of Jehovah. He was content with the calf-worship of Jeroboam, and inasmuch as he took no heed to walk in the law of the God of Israel, but followed in the steps of Jeroboam, the blood he had shed was after all in gratification of his own will, and not to fulfil the will of God; and so God declared by the prophet Hosea: "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu."† Jehu reigned twenty-eight years over Israel, and was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz. In his reign Hazael, King of Syria, continued to bring upon Israel all the evils which began in the days of Jehu, when "the Lord began to cut Israel short," according to the prophecy of Elisha, who wept for the woes coming upon his country.‡ Hazael smote the tribes beyond the Jordan in Gilead and Bashan, till, in the words of the prophet Amos, they were "threshed with threshing instruments of iron,"§ and he compelled the King of Israel to limit his army according to his will. Jehoahaz reigned eighteen years, and his son Joash succeeded him.

\* 2 Kings v. 1—19.

† 2 Kings viii. 11, 12.

‡ Hosea i. 4.

§ Amos i. 3, 4.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON LV.

*Question.* In whose reign did the apostacy of Israel and the wickedness of the kings of Israel reach their highest point?

*Q.* What prophet did God raise up to confound the prophets of Baal?

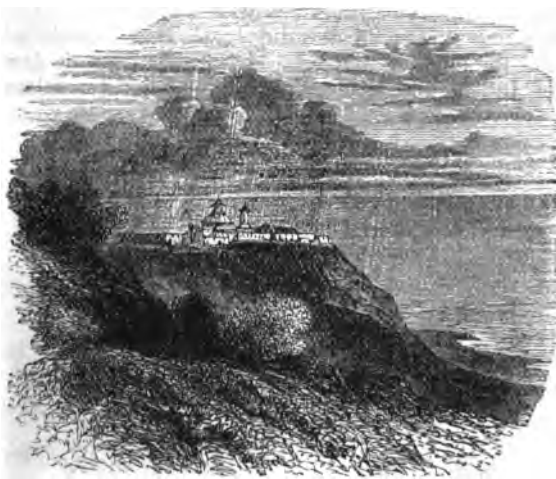
*Q.* What became of the prophets of Baal?

*Q.* What king of Israel introduced the worship of Baal and Ashtaroath, the gods of the Zidonians?

*Q.* Who did God make the instrument of His vengeance against the house of Ahab?

*Q.* Did Jehu walk in God's ways?

*Q.* What decree did God make against him?



MOUNT CARMEL.

## LESSON LVI.

Last days of the kingdom of Israel—Reign of Joash—Elisha and Joash—He defeats Ben-hadad, King of Syria, and recovers the cities of Israel—Defeats Amaziah, King of Judah—Jeroboam II., the saviour of Israel—Breaks the power of Syria—Social characteristics of his reign—The prophet Hosea on these times—Assyrian invasions—Hoshea—The siege of Samaria—Sargon—He removes the people of Israel from their own land—End of the kingdom of Israel.

*Read 2 Kings xiii.—xxv.*

JEHOAHAZ was succeeded by his son Joash, or Jehoash. He likewise did evil in the sight of the Lord, and departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. Nevertheless (in a time of affliction) he wept over the dying prophet Elisha, exclaiming, "O my father, my



father! the chariot of Irsael, and the horsemen thereof!"\* for, like Elisha when parting from Elijah,† he knew the man of God was a better defence against the foes of his kingdom than chariots and horses and the arm of flesh. Elisha told the King of Israel to shoot an arrow eastward from the window, and this, he said, was "the arrow of deliverance from Syria." But when at Elisha's command to shoot into the ground, Joash shot only three times, the prophet reproved his want of zeal and faith, saying, "Thou shouldst have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it; whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice." And so it came to pass. "Three times did Joash beat Ben-hadad, and recovered the cities of Israel." He fought also with Amaziah, King of Judah, and defeated him, pillaging Jerusalem and



HILL OF SAMARIA.

carrying away the treasures of the temple. But his son, Jeroboam II., was raised up by the Lord to be the "saviour" or deliverer of Israel.† He restored the frontier of Israel from Hamath to the Dead Sea, and reconquered Gilead and Moab and Ammon. Thus by a succession of victories he broke the power of Syria, and even made Damascus, its capital, tributary to the King of Israel; but his reign, though outwardly prosperous, was a period of internal decay, and it was followed by eleven years of complete anarchy. At last Zachariah, the son

\* 2 Kings xiii. 14.

† 2 Kings ii. 12.

‡ 2 Kings xiii. 5, xiv. 25—27.

of Jeroboam II., became king, but only to be assassinated by a usurper, Shallum. During the remaining years of the kingdom of Israel the corruption became general. "There is no truth," said the prophet Hosea, "nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood."\* The Assyrians first invaded the land in the reign of Menahem, a monster of cruelty, and he was the first king who paid tribute to the King of Assyria. The next king, Pekahiah, the son of Menahem, was slain by Pekah, a captain of his body-guard, and it was in his reign that Tiglath-Pileser, invading the kingdom of Israel for the third time, conquered the provinces beyond the Jordan, and carried away captive the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Hoshea, the nineteenth and last king of Israel, came to the throne on the murder of Pekah, and paid tribute to Shalmaneser, who had succeeded Tiglath-Pileser as King of Assyria. Shalmaneser, discovering that Hoshea was seeking help from the King of Egypt, invaded the land of Israel and besieged Samaria; but before the city yielded he had lost his life, and was succeeded by Sargon, who took Samaria B.C. 723, after it had held out for three years, and the inhabitants had endured terrible sufferings. Sargon's policy was to remove the greater part of the people of Israel into his own land of Assyria. This was the completion of the captivity of the ten tribes. It was the day of the Lord's threatened vengeance upon Israel, and the kingdom of Israel came utterly to an end. The ten tribes that had destroyed the national unity by revolting from the house of David and debased the national religion by setting up a rival and heretical worship, were carried captive into heathen lands, and "removed out of God's sight," as unworthy any longer to be reckoned amongst His people, or to share in the privileges of His inheritance.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON LVI.

*Question.* Who succeeded Jehoahaz?

*Q.* What was his success against Syria?

*Q.* Who succeeded Joash, and what name did he win?

*Q.* When did the Assyrians first invade the land?

*Q.* What was the consequence to Israel of the third Assyrian invasion?

*Q.* What happened in the reign of Hoshea?

*Q.* Did the siege of Samaria last a long time?

*Q.* What was Sargon's policy towards the people of Israel?

*Q.* What the consequence?

\* Hosea iv. 2.

## LESSON LVII.

The kingdom of Judah—Rehoboam's reign—Abijah—His victory over Jeroboam—Asa defeats the army of Israel—Puts down idolatry—Jehoshaphat—His hatred of idolatry—His faith and piety—How he erred—His solemn assembly in the temple—His prayer—His deliverance from the heathen invaders—Jehoram—Jehoahaz—Athaliah—Jehoiada—Joash—Solemn covenant to be faithful to Jehovah.

*Read 2 Chron. x.—xv.*

THE history of the kingdom of Israel is little more than a succession of murders and usurpations and idolatries ; and of each one of its nineteen kings the invariable record is, " Who did sin, and who made Israel to sin." The chronicles of the kingdom of Judah are less dreary, for though bad kings reigned, and idolatry was at times triumphant, yet worthy descendants of David—princes who feared God and cared for the welfare of His people—did sometimes sit upon the throne of David. The revolt of the ten tribes did but fulfil the word of the Lord to Solomon and to Jeroboam ; therefore Rehoboam was forbidden "to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again" to the house of David. So when the assembled warriors heard this word of the Lord spoken by Shemaiah, the man of God, they hearkened unto the word of the Lord, and returned to depart. For the first few years of his reign Rehoboam walked in the fear of the Lord ; but by-and-by, like his father Solomon, he married many wives, and they became a snare to him. One of them set up an idol-shrine, and the consequence was that Rehoboam and his people departed more and more from the worship of Jehovah, and, as usual, calamity followed. Shishak, King of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the Lord's house and rifled the king's house (B.C. 791). Rehoboam, after reigning seventeen years, was succeeded by his son Abijah, who made war against Jeroboam, and routed his army with great slaughter. Abijah died after a brief reign of three years, and left his throne to his son Asa. He defeated the army of Egypt in the open field, but his greatest conquests were over the idolatry of the time. He destroyed the idols throughout the land ; nor did he spare the idolatrous queen mother, Maachah, whom he deposed from her position of authority, and put away the special idol she had introduced.\* Asa likewise restored the worship of Jehovah, and caused the people to enter into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul.† Another good king was Asa's

\* 1 Kings xv. 9—13.

† 2 Chron. xv. 12.

son, Jehoshaphat, who succeeded him. He possessed the hatred of idolatry and love of the worship of the God of Israel, which were conspicuous in Asa, as well as a faith and piety that led him not only to root out the evil, but to teach the truth and to endeavour to bring "the people back to the Lord God of their fathers." Yet Jehoshaphat erred in making an alliance with Ahab, King of Israel, and his heathen queen, Jezebel. He was Ahab's ally in war, and connected himself and his dynasty still more closely with him and his guilty house by permitting his son Jehoram to marry Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and this was a sin that produced the most bitter fruits.

But a lesson of a different kind—of faith in God and trust in His help, of the power of prayer and its support, comfort, and efficacy in the time of trouble—is taught by Jehoshaphat when a vast army of Moabites and Ammonites and other wild tribes entered his kingdom and threatened it with destruction. He "set himself to seek the Lord," and proclaimed a fast and a solemn assembly in the temple, and there he pleaded with God—the God of his fathers, in whose hand there is power and might. He is the God of Israel, a God who will hear and help. "O our God," he prayed, "wilt Thou not judge them, for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes wait upon Thee. And all Israel stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children." Nor did Jehoshaphat appeal to God in vain, for he had walked in the ways of his father David, and sought the Lord God of his father, and walked in His commandments, putting away the idols and bringing back Israel to the Lord God of their fathers. So God said: "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. . . . Ye shall not need to fight in this battle. Set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Again both king and people bowed the head and worshipped, while the Levites praised the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice. Early in the morning the king and people went forth, no longer fearing the heathen host. The Levites sang the songs of Zion, and the king exhorted the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to believe in the Lord their God. From the watch-tower they looked upon the enemy, and what did they behold? "Dead bodies fallen to the earth." Ammonites and Moabites and Edomites had slaughtered one another until none were left. Then, after gathering great spoil, the people returned to Jerusalem with great joy, with psalteries and harps and trumpets, and, the king leading the way, they

entered the house of God, to return thanks to Him who had fought against the enemies of Israel.\*

Jehoshaphat died after reigning twenty-five years, and was succeeded by his son Jehoram. His days as king were few and evil. The husband of Athaliah, the wicked daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, he walked in the ways of the house of Ahab. Idolatry and murder—the murder of his brethren—were amongst his crimes; and he added sin to sin till the Lord smote him, and he died miserably of sore diseases. Jehoahaz, or Ahaziah, his son, became king, and his mother was his evil counsellor. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and after one year he was slain by Jehu, who was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab. Then Athaliah, when she saw that her son was dead, destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah, and “reigned over the land.”† For a while the wicked Athaliah triumphed. A heathen queen sat upon the throne of David, and Baal-worship was exalted over the worship of Jehovah. But God remembered His covenant with David, and he raised up as a deliverer the high priest Jehoiada. Joash, a son of Ahaziah, had been saved from Athaliah’s massacre of the descendants of David, and after enduring the rule of Athaliah for six years he and other patriots dethroned the usurping queen and proclaimed Joash king. The temple of Baal was then destroyed and its priest slain. Then king, priest, and people bound themselves by a solemn covenant to be faithful to Jehovah.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON LVII.

*Question.* After the revolt of these ten tribes, did Rehoboam rule his people wisely?

*Q.* Who was the next King of Judah?

*Q.* Was Asa a good king?

*Q.* What was the character of Jehoshaphat, Asa’s son, who succeeded him?

*Q.* In what way did he err?

*Q.* In what special way did Jehoshaphat show his faith and trust in God?

*Q.* How long did this good king reign, and who succeeded him?

*Q.* Did Jehoram reign a long while, and what was his character?

*Q.* What were some of his crimes?

*Q.* What was his end?

*Q.* Who was the next king; and what was his end?

*Q.* What did Athaliah do when she saw that her son was dead?

*Q.* Who did God raise up as a deliverer?

\* 2 Chron. xx. 1—30.

† 2 Chron. xxii. 3—12.

## LESSON LVIII.

Joash and Zechariah—Amaziah defeats the Edomites—Defeated by Joash, King of Israel—Uzziah—His prosperity—He burns incense—Becomes a leper—Jotham—Ahaz—Defeated by the kings of Syria and Israel—Asks the help of Tiglath-Pileser—Apostasy of Ahaz—Condition of Judah—Death of Ahaz.

*Read 2 Chron. xiv.—xxviii.*

WHILE Jehoiada lived Joash ruled well and wisely ; but after his death he forgot the covenant he had entered into with God. He permitted idol worship, and when the prophet Zechariah warned him of the evil of his doings he caused him to be stoned to death near the altar of burnt-offering. " Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The Lord look upon it, and require it."\* And God did look upon it, and speedily executed judgment against Joash. The host of Syria came up against him and against his people, and his own servants conspired against him and slew him. His son Amaziah, who became king, avenged himself on his father's murderers, but spared their children. He gained a great victory over the Edomites, but worshipped their idols ; and in his war with Joash, King of Israel, whom he defied, he suffered a terrible defeat at Bethshemesh. Joash pillaged Jerusalem, and carried away the treasures of the temple to Samaria. After a reign of twenty-nine years Amaziah lost his life by a conspiracy. During the long reign of fifty-two years of his son Uzziah the kingdom of Judah enjoyed a prosperity that recalled the days of Jehoshaphat. He introduced new engines of defence, and was successful in his foreign wars, subduing the Philistines, and exacting tribute from Ammon and the Arabian tribes. He repaired the walls of Jerusalem, built watch-towers to overawe the robbers, while by attention to husbandry and other arts of peace he improved the internal condition of the country. But when his heart was lifted up he sinned by invading the priest's office, and burning incense upon the altar of incense ; nor would he hearken to the reproof of the priests of the Lord. Then the Lord smote him with leprosy, and Jotham his son ruled in his stead. Jotham succeeded on the death of his father ; and after an able but not remarkable reign of sixteen years he was succeeded by his son Ahaz, the worst and most unfortunate king who had yet ruled the kingdom of Judah. Pekah, the usurping King of Israel, and Rezin, King of Syria, invaded Judah and defeated the army of Ahaz with great slaughter, and Pekah led away a great number of captives to

\* 2 Chron. xxiv. 22 ; Matt. xxiii. 35.

Samaria, but the Israelites would not detain them. Pitying their brethren, they gave them all needful things and sent them back to their homes in Judæa. Attacked on all sides by Syrians and Israelites, Edomites and Philistines, Ahaz sought the help of Tiglath-Pileser, the conquering King of Assyria, who had already taken possession of the territories of Israel beyond the Jordan. The prophet Isaiah assured him of deliverance from the confederate kings of Syria and Israel, and their power was destroyed by the Assyrian king, who invaded Syria, killed Rezin its king, and then attacked Pekah, King of Israel; but Ahaz, not content with God's promises, thought to secure his own safety by a base subservience to his powerful ally. He publicly worshipped the gods of Assyria, apostatised from the faith of his fathers, and practised every heathen rite and abomination. "In every part of Jerusalem and in all the cities of Judah rose altars to strange gods; and at length the lamps in the temple were put out, the doors closed, and the temple worship suspended." Thus a king of the house of David rivalled Ahab in wickedness, and wearied not only men but God.

But while the kingdom of Israel was cut off from the true worship of God, and the most reforming of its kings did not return to any purer faith than the forbidden worship of Jeroboam, the kings of Judah were all of the race of David, and when the godly ones amongst them abolished idolatry it was to return to the national religion and the lofty teaching of the Mosaic ritual. And at this time, when the southern kingdom had sunk to so low a condition, its ruin was averted for a time by a king of the royal race whose ardent patriotism and exalted faith enabled him to overcome every difficulty and triumph over every foe. The death of Ahaz and the accession of his son Hezekiah were events of the very highest importance to the kingdom of Judah.

## LESSON LIX.

Hezekiah and the prophet Micah—Hezekiah puts down idolatry and restores the temple services—Throws off the yoke of Assyria—Pays an enormous tribute—Rabshakeh and Hezekiah—Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah—Sennacherib's letter—Hezekiah's deliverance—Hezekiah's recovery from sickness—His death.

*Read 2 Chron. xxix.—xxxii.*

WHEN the young King Hezekiah came to the throne many of his counsellors and influential men were for continuing the policy of King Ahaz, and seeking security in foreign alliances rather than in the help and favour of the God of Israel; and the chief man of this party was Shebna, the comptroller of the

royal household. But the Lord had His witnesses. Isaiah prophesied of cities without inhabitants, and houses forsaken and the land desolate; while Micah spake to all the people of Judah of coming judgment on the house of Israel and the high places of Judah. Especially to Hezekiah did he address words of solemn warning in the name of the Lord God of his fathers. And the king hearkened to him, and became very zealous in the good work of putting down all idolatrous worship, restoring the temple services, and making again the hill of Zion the centre of the national worship. For this end he invited all Israel to join with Judah in keeping a passover to the Lord; and many obeying the call, the holy festival once more made glad the city of God.

Nor would Hezekiah submit any longer to heathen tyranny. He refused tribute to Assyria, and the armies of Sennacherib invaded Judæa, and besieged Jerusalem. The king made vigorous preparations to resist the besieging army, and this time he escaped the vengeance of the conqueror by the payment of an enormous tribute and the sacrifice of the treasures of the newly-adorned temple, which purchased a respite, but at the end of two or three years the armies of the Assyrian king once more encompassed Jerusalem. Sennacherib was engaged in the conquest of Egypt, but his three principal officers—Tartan, Rabсарis, and Rabshakeh—brought his message of unconditional surrender to Hezekiah. Rabshakeh taunted him and his people with their trust in the God of their fathers. "Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the King of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? Have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand?" By command of Hezekiah the people answered him not a word; but it was a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy. Yet God might rebuke the daring blasphemer who had sent to reproach the living God. Hezekiah with every outward signs of mourning went into the house of the Lord and sent a message to Isaiah the prophet telling him the words of Rabshakeh, and begging him to lift up his prayer that God would reprove the words of the King of Assyria. Hezekiah had served God when no danger was at hand, and now in the time of peril he was encouraged by God's message of comfort and promises of support; for this was the answer of the prophet Isaiah to his king: "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the King of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him." When the officers of Sennacherib found that Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem were not to be frightened into immediate surrender



they withdrew their army from Jerusalem to aid their master in the siege of Libna. Again, from Libna the Assyrian king sent a yet more threatening and peremptory summons to surrender, and a yet more blasphemous defiance of the God in whom Hezekiah trusted. Hezekiah's piety and faith were again put to the test, but they failed him not. Once more he went up to the house of the Lord, and spread the letter before the Lord. And, through the prophet, God again sent Hezekiah a message of comfort. God had heard Hezekiah's prayer and the blasphemous words of the King of Assyria, and He would put his hook in his nose and his bridle in his lips and turn him back by the way by which he came. Moreover the Lord said, "He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow against there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it."\* God's judgments on the army of Sennacherib speedily followed, for that very night the Lord smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand. The proud King of Assyria did not perish with his army, but died by the hands of his own sons as he was worshipping in the house of his god.

Once again Hezekiah's earnest prayer received a remarkable answer. Smitten with a dangerous illness, Isaiah warned him to "set his house in order," for "he should die, and not live;" but he pleaded with God that the prophet's words might not be fulfilled in his immediate death, and God sent him word that He had heard his prayer and seen his tears, and that He would add to his life fifteen years. But when Berodach-balodan, King of Babylon, sent ambassadors to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery, he vainly paraded his treasures before them. This displeased God, and he sent Hezekiah a message of reproof by Isaiah, who told him that all the silver and gold and precious things that he had so ostentatiously displayed, should be carried to Babylon, and that his sons should serve in the palace of the King of Babylon; but the evil should not happen in the time of Hezekiah. His remaining days were passed in peace and prosperity; and so he answered in a submissive, if sorrowful spirit, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken."†

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON LIX.

*Question.* To what prophet did Hezekiah give heed?

*Q.* In what way did Hezekiah show how much the words of the prophet had impressed him?

*Q.* How did Hezekiah act towards the King of Assyria?

*Q.* What was the consequence of his refusing to submit to him?

*Q.* Did Sennacherib trouble Hezekiah any more?

*Q.* Did Hezekiah obey his summons to surrender?

\* 2 Kings xviii. 13—37, xix. 1—34.

† 2 Kings xx.

- Q. And what answer did God make to Hezekiah's prayer ?  
 Q. Did Rabshakeh go on with the siege of Jerusalem ?  
 Q. Did the King of Assyria again trouble Hezekiah ?  
 Q. How did Hezekiah act ?  
 Q. Did God hearken to him ?  
 Q. How did God deal with the Assyrian army ?  
 Q. In what other way did Hezekiah receive a remarkable answer to prayer ?

## LESSON LX.

Character of Manasseh and his crimes—His repentance—Amon re-establishes idolatry—Josiah's great reformation—Finding the Book of the Law—Death of Josiah—Jehoahaz—Taken in chains to Egypt—Jehoiakim—His fierce, cruel, and godless character—Nebuchadnezzar at Jerusalem—The first captivity of Judah—Jeconiah—Second captivity of Judah—Zedekiah—Final captivity.

*Read 2 Chron. xxxiii.—xxxvi.*

MANASSEH, an unworthy son whose aim seemed to be to undo all the good his father had done, succeeded Hezekiah. His evil deeds, his blasphemous idolatries, his sacrilegious murders, his desecration of the temple, his persecution of the prophets and of the worshippers of Jehovah ; how, during this reign of terror, "he shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another," and how he seduced the people of the Lord "to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel," are recorded in the 21st chapter of the second Book of Kings, which is but a brief history of his crimes. With such a king the ruin of the kingdom of Judah and the doom of its people were inevitable ; and when the armies of Esar-haddon appeared before Jerusalem the country was reduced to such a state of weakness that no resistance was attempted. Manasseh, "bound with fetters," was taken away to learn wisdom in the dungeons of Babylon. Then his repentance seems to have been very real, for he besought the Lord, and "humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers" ; and "he knew that the Lord he was God."\* Moreover, God was entreated of him and brought him again to Jerusalem, where he took away the idols and repaired the altar of the Lord. His son Amon re-established idolatry ; but after reigning two years he lost his life by a conspiracy amongst his officers. Josiah, his son, was but a child of eight years when he came to the throne, and the corruption that prevailed during his minority is portrayed in the darkest colours by the prophets Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah ; but in early youth he began to seek after the God of David his father, and he became a king who exceeded in righteousness all who had gone before him. His

\* 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13.

sweeping reform extended not only over his own kingdom of Judah, but included the land of Israel, which was then but a province of Assyria. The high places and the idols, and all heathen rites and abominations he utterly abolished ; and while this destruction of things evil was going on the restoration of the national religion and the repair of the temple were zealously undertaken. Another great event was the finding the Book of the Law by Hilkiah the priest. Both king and people rejoiced greatly ; but the king heard with dread its awful denunciations. It was read in public, and Josiah carried out its Divine precepts, while he humbled himself before God and sought to do His will. The prophetess Huldah told him that God's judgments still hung over the nation, but that in his days there should be peace. So Josiah called together the whole people of Israel and Judah to keep the Passover. It was kept with a grandeur and magnificence unknown during the days of the monarchy, and the whole nation renewed its covenant to worship Jehovah only. The sway of Assyria was now passing to Babylon, but Egypt was still powerful and its king, Pharaoh-Necho, sought to possess himself of Carchemish. Josiah opposed his passage at Megiddo, on the plain of Esdraelon, and there he lost his life by an Egyptian arrow. The prophet Jeremiah wrote a lament over the king, and all the nation mourned for him. His son and successor was Jehoahaz or Shallum ; but in three months' time the victorious Necho took him in chains to Egypt. The conqueror then permitted Eliakim, an elder son of Josiah, who now took the name of Jehoiakim, to rule as king, but he proved fierce, cruel, and godless, and Judah, whose repentance had been but feigned, again burned incense to Baal. In the fourth year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, invaded Judæa, besieged Jerusalem, put Jehoiakim, the vassal of Egypt, in fetters, and carried the precious vessels of the temple and many captives to Babylon. This was the first captivity of Judah. He allowed Jehoiakim still to rule, but he was tributary to the King of Babylon, and king only in name. A time of trouble followed, and in three years' time the faithless Jehoiakim rebelled in expectation of help from Egypt, and thus fresh calamities upon his country, which was ravaged by the wild tribes and robber bands. Jeremiah denounced king, princes, and people. In the eleventh year of his reign Jehoiakim's wicked career was brought to an end by a violent death and he was buried "with the burial of an ass." His son Jehoiachin, Jeconiah, or Coniah, reigned for three months, but he was, as the prophet called him, "a despised broken idol, a vessel wherein was no pleasure."\*

\* Jer. xxii. 28.

Nebuchadnezzar himself then appeared at Jerusalem ; the city surrendered at discretion, and the second captivity took place. The king and nobles, as well as soldiers and artisans, were taken to Babylon, and amongst the captives was the prophet Ezekiel. Nebuchadnezzar set up as king over this wreck of a country Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, and for eleven years this weak and degraded puppet king made God's people to sin. "Within the temple itself the elders burned incense to the idols painted on the sacred walls, the women wept for the false god Tam-muz, and the sun worshippers adored their god with their faces towards the east." The false prophets and prophetesses continued to relate their lying visions, and to raise hopes of a return of captives from Babylon in two years' time. But at last, when they came not, Zedekiah in despair broke his oath to the King of Babylon and sought help from Egypt. But it was in vain ; the army of the King of Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem, and in the "Lamentations" of Jeremiah the miseries of its inhabitants are pourtrayed. All the terrible predictions of Jeremiah were fulfilled when the city fell. The glorious temple was destroyed, while the sacred vessels, the ark, and cherubim were profaned by heathen hands. The miserable Zedekiah beheld the execution of his sons, and then, when his eyes had been thrust out, he was taken to Babylon B.C. 588, together with many other captives. The miserable remnant left as vinedressers and husbandmen were placed under Gedaliah, who was appointed governor by the King of Babylon. For seventy years were the chosen people to remain captive in Babylon, there to mourn over the past in deep repentance, to hope for the establishment of a better covenant, the now broken covenant made with their fathers. They could not sing the songs of Zion in a strange land ; they could only say, "O God, the heathen are come unto Thine inheritance ; Thy holy temple have they defiled ; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps." \*

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON LX.

*Question.* What was the character of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, who succeeded him ?

*Q.* What evidences did he give of true repentance.

*Q.* Did Manasseh's son, Josiah, resemble his grandfather Hezekiah ?

*Q.* What great event happened in his reign, and how did he meet with his death ?

*Q.* Was Jehoiakim a good king ?

*Q.* What judgment fell upon the kingdom of Judah in his reign ?

*Q.* What great prophet lived at this time, and warned kings, princes, and people.

*Q.* What puppet king did Nebuchadnezzar set up at Jerusalem, and what was the consequence of his rebellion ?

\* Ps. lxxix. 1.

## Part II.

## THE CAPTIVITY AND RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

## LESSON I.

The ten tribes in captivity—The tribes of Judah and Benjamin—What the story of the captivity teaches—Prophets of the captivity—How the Jews of the captivity received God's message.

*Read Dan. v.*

THE ten revolted tribes that formed the kingdom of Israel were, as we have seen, carried away captive by Sargon, who succeeded Shalmaneser as King of Assyria. This happened 721 years before the birth of our Lord; and since that time these tribes have had no history, for they were lost amongst the nations of the East. Thus God removed Israel "out of His sight," and they are hidden until He who scattered His people shall gather them, and bring them into their own land.\*

But the history of the tribes that remained faithful to the house of David and to the true worship of Jehovah was very different. Their national life lasted longer by more than 100 years, and though at last led into captivity, they were not cast out of God's sight, and they learnt, through the discipline of affliction, to prize the blessings and great religious privileges they had lost by their own neglect of them. They lived, indeed, in the midst of the heathen, yet as a distinct and separate people, refusing to sing the songs of Sion in a strange land, and ever longing for a restoration to their beloved country.

And to us this story of the captivity is full of instruction. It teaches us that though "unhappiness and misfortunes are sharp and stern teachers," yet "if men are brought in humility and self-reproach to a genuine repentance, if they learn to call upon God and to search for Him with all their heart, they may take comfort and encouragement from the many bright promises made concerning the restoration of the children of Israel to the land of their forefathers."

\* Ezek. xxxvii. 21—25.

We now follow the fortune of the people of Judah in the land of their captivity.

In the midst of judgment God remembered mercy. The time of the Babylonish captivity was for God's people a time of trial and a time of purifying, but it was not a cruel slavery, nor an Egyptian bondage. Certain districts of the country were assigned to them, and they were allowed to possess themselves of houses and land and other property. Some of their number were instructed in all the learning of the Chaldeans\* and appointed to high offices before the king; but still exile was more bitter and a severer punishment to the Jews than to the people of any other nation. It was not only banishment from a land that was to them most holy, but it cut them off from all the ordinances of their religion—a religion that differed as much from the Babylonish worship of the heavenly bodies as their own pleasant land of hill and valley and fertile plains, of vineyards and olive gardens, differed from the low flat country watered by the great river Euphrates. They knew, however, that the time of their captivity was limited to seventy years,† and they were cheered by many glorious promises of restoration to their own land, and to the favour of God. Moreover, God would make a new covenant with them, by putting His law in their inward parts and writing it in their hearts. They should know the Lord, from the least of them unto the greatest, and He would forgive their iniquities and remember their sins no more.‡ Nor were they left without counsellors. Jeremiah wrote them letters of instruction and guidance, and amongst themselves, in the land of their captivity, God raised up prophets to declare His will—to reprove, to exhort, to warn, and to comfort. Ezekiel lived with his brethren in a colony of Jews on the river Chebar. There he prophesied and delivered God's messages to them with great plainness and boldness of speech. They listened gladly to his glowing words; but they did not lay them to heart, nor take pains to understand their solemn import.

There were men amongst them of great wisdom and piety who profited by the parables of God's messenger, and searched out their spiritual signification; but to most of them they were dark sayings, the meaning of which they cared not to discover; and they preferred the flattering words of the false prophets who said "Peace, peace," when there was no peace.

\* This word is thought to have been first applied to a single tribe, then to the whole country and people of Babylon, and lastly to a class of men learned in literature and possessing a knowledge of the old language in which that literature was written.

† Jer. xxv. 11, 12.

‡ Jer. xxxi. 31—34.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON I.

*Question.* In what year were the ten revolted tribes that formed the kingdom of Israel carried away captive?

*Q.* Do we know anything about the history of the ten tribes in captivity, or where they are at the present time?

*Q.* How much longer did the national life of those tribes last that remained faithful to the house of David?

*Q.* Did they mingle with heathen people amongst whom they lived?

*Q.* Was their captivity in Babylon a cruel slavery—a second Egyptian bondage?

*Q.* Did this make up to the Jews for being exiled from their own land?

*Q.* Were the Jews in Babylon left without instruction?

*Q.* Did they lay God's message to heart?

## LESSON II.

King Nebuchadnezzar—Daniel declares the king's dream and its interpretation—The image of gold, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—Nebuchadnezzar's pride and its punishment—Empire of the Medes and Persians—Cyrus—Darius—Daniel's trial of faith.

*Read Dan. ii.—vi.*

THE king, Nebuchadnezzar, who dwelt in the great city of Babylon, and who ruled the empire of Babylon for more than half the period of its last eighty-eight years, had no equal in all the world. He was a man of renown; but he was greater still in the arts of peace. He made Babylon the "golden city," the capital of his kingdom, the wonder of the world. Its walls and towers and brazen gates, its great temples and hanging gardens, its buildings, and even its canals, were all evidences of the genius and greatness of its king. But instead of giving God the glory, he worshipped his own glory, and said, in the pride of his heart, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"

It was this great king who required his wise men "to declare the king's dream" and its interpretation; but Daniel only, by the Spirit of God, was able to obey the royal command. He alone could tell the king what his dream had been, and so give proof that he could interpret it. He explained how the great image, with its head of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet of iron and clay, represented four great empires—the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, the Roman, as many think—and that the kingdom of Christ, which should succeed to them, would be a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, that should break

in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, and should stand for ever. And Daniel declared that the dream was certain and the interpretation sure. The king raised him to great power, making him "ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon," and he acknowledged that Daniel's God was a "God of gods, and a Lord of kings."\*

It was this same Nebuchadnezzar who set up the golden image—which probably represented his god Merodach—and cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into a burning fiery



DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN.

furnace for refusing to worship it. In their deliverance he had another proof of the power of the God of Daniel, so that he blessed the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and confessed that no other God could deliver after that sort.†

Again Nebuchadnezzar had another dream, or vision of things to come, and this time also Daniel made its meaning known to him.

\* Dan. ii.

† Dan. iii.



The pride of the great king was to be rebuked and humbled. His reason was to depart from him for a season. He was to be driven from among men. He would become like the beasts of the field, and would be as one of them until he knew that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men. Nor did Daniel fear to counsel the king to "break off his sins by righteousness." At the end of one year all this came to pass. While the judgment lasted he was put under restraint, and his queen ruled in his stead. But Daniel had declared that his kingdom should be sure to him, and so it happened. After a time—at the end probably of seven years—he was restored to a sane mind, and to all his former power. Nebuchadnezzar's reign lasted forty-four years.

When Cyrus laid siege to Babylon and took it, and the empire of the Medes and Persians succeeded the Babylonian, the handwriting upon the wall startled Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, in the midst of his impious feast. That same night he was slain, and Cyrus made Darius, the Mede, his deputy king over the realm of the Chaldeans.\*

It was by order of this king, though much against his will, that Daniel was cast into the den of lions. The princes of Babylon were jealous of the foreigner who had been preferred over them and made the king's first minister, and they entrapped Darius into making a decree that, apparently, consigned the Hebrew prophet to certain death. But Daniel was sure that his God could save him from the lions. He feared them not, and when he knew the king had signed the writing and established an unalterable decree, that whosoever should ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, but of the king only, should be cast into the den of lions, he still "kneeled upon his knees three times a day" in his chamber, looking towards Jerusalem, and prayed and gave thanks to God as he did aforetime. Then, indeed, his enemies seemed to have accomplished his destruction. But no, though cast into the den of lions "the Angel of Deliverance was there. The same Divine Presence that was in the fiery furnace had descended to the den. . . . The faith which had formerly quenched the violence of fire now stopped the mouths of lions. Daniel had no battle with the fierce monsters around him. He did not fight the lions. He left that to God: he made God his shield. He was ready to live or prepared to die, according to the will of God. He put the faithfulness of God betwixt himself and death. He had only to stand still and see the salvation of God." The king could not rest. All night he fasted and watched, and no instrument of music was heard in his palace.

\* Dan. v. 31, ix. 1.

But the silent hours that Daniel passed in the lion's den were much more memorable; and when at last the king hastened to it at the break of day, and tremblingly asked whether Daniel's God—the living God whom he served continually—had been able to deliver him, he answered joyfully, "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me." So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, *because he believed in his God.\**

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON II.

*Question.* What great king ruled the empire of Babylon for more than half of its last period of greatness?

*Q.* What sort of a man was he?

*Q.* How did God rebuke his pride?

*Q.* Were his reason and power restored to him?

*Q.* What happened in the reign of Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar?

*Q.* What remarkable event in Jewish history happened in the reign of Darius?

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### LESSON III.

The restoration—Proclamation of Cyrus—Zerubbabel—Joshua—Foundation of the second temple laid—The work is hindered—It ceases—Zerubbabel and Joshua reproved by Haggai—Zechariah exhorts and encourages—King Darius confirms the decree of Cyrus—Completion of the second temple.

*Read Ezra i.—vi.*

WHEN the appointed seventy years of the captivity† had passed away, Cyrus was himself reigning at Babylon. Isaiah had prophesied of him as the Lord's "anointed," ‡ His "Shepherd," who should perform all His pleasure: "Saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid;" § and after about 170 years the words of the prophet were fulfilled.

In his proclamation for the restoration of the Jews to their own land Cyrus declared that he was but obeying a Divine command. "The Lord God of heaven . . . hath charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem," || and he restored to Zerubbabel, a prince of the house of David who was to be the leader of the expedition and governor of Judæa, the sacred vessels of the Jewish temple which had been taken as a spoil to Babylon. And so some 50,000 Jewish exiles set out for

\* Dan. vi. 3—23.

† Reckoning from the first captivity in B.C. 606.

‡ Isa. xlv. i.

§ Isa. xlv. 28.

|| Ezra i. 2.

Jerusalem. It was a time of rejoicing. The returning children of the captivity, though mostly born in Babylon, had inherited from their fathers that intense national feeling for which the Jewish people were remarkable.

They had, however, difficulties to encounter that must have tried their faith and tested their fortitude to the utmost. They were, indeed, fortunate in having such a leader as Zerubbabel, who, besides being a prince of the house of David, was a man devoted to God's service, and Joshua their high priest was a worthy successor of that Joshua who first led the children of Israel into the Promised Land. But into how different a country did the Joshua of these days conduct them! Instead of a land flowing with milk and honey, cultivated, and abounding with vineyards and gardens, corn and wine and oil, all of which the chosen people were permitted to make their own, they returned after their sojourn in Babylon to what was little better than a desolate wilderness. The country lay waste, and it was overrun by wild tribes of the desert who were scarcely removed from the wild beasts that dwelt amongst them. The sacred vessels, which Belshazzar was profaning when the handwriting on the wall prophesied his sudden destruction, had been restored to the Israelites by Cyrus, and they had brought these treasures with them, intending to devote them at once to the service of God with praise and thanksgiving. But where was that glorious temple that Solomon had built for the worship of the God of Israel? It was now a heap of ruins, and the first task of the returning exiles was to lay again the foundations of the sanctuary. Cedar trees were again brought from Lebanon, material was collected, contributions were brought in, and by the beginning of the following year the rebuilding of the temple was begun with singing and the sound of the trumpet and shouts of joy. Yet the aged, who remembered the more glorious past, who thought of the time when Solomon reigned over a populous and united kingdom, wept at the contrast. Zerubbabel, their leader, himself laid the foundation stone, but he owned allegiance to a Gentile power, and his people were but a small band of patriots.

The foundation of the second temple was laid on the site of Solomon's temple, but the work of building went on slowly amidst the difficulties and dangers that encompassed it on every side, and after a while it ceased altogether. The Samaritans, who claimed to be of Israelitish descent, offered their help in the building of the temple; but Zerubbabel and Joshua regarding them as a people of foreign descent, sprung from those heathen colonists who in times past had been "placed in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of

Israel" by the King of Assyria,\* refused all alliance with them. The Samaritans then became the bitter enemies of the Jews, hindering them in their work, and exciting the jealousy of the King of Persia against them. Under these discouragements the zeal of the Jews gradually cooled, and their work for God became less and less, until it was entirely put a stop to by a decree of the King of Persia. The holy seasons and the daily sacrifices were duly celebrated, but the building of the temple ceased.

During this period God's people thought more of their own welfare than of God's honour, and more of the difficulties that attended their work for Him than of His Almighty power; and so God withheld His blessing from them, and punished them with drought, and tempest, and failure of crops. But they were slow to understand that it was God's doing, and that it was sent as a chastisement for their own want of faith. So at last God reproved Zerubbabel and Joshua by the mouth of the prophet Haggai, and pleaded with them, saying, "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses" (houses inlaid with cedar), "and this house lie waste? Now, therefore, saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways."† Then, after the work had ceased for about fourteen years, it recommenced in earnest. Zerubbabel and Joshua and all the remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, to build His house, and in four years the temple was completed. While it was in progress God sent them encouraging messages. His word to them by Haggai was, "I am with you, saith the Lord," "Fear ye not"‡; and though this second temple could not equal the outward splendour of the first temple, yet they might rejoice in God's assurance, "the glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former."§

The prophet Zechariah also spoke words of exhortation and encouragement. The mountain of difficulty "before Zerubbabel shall become a plain. . . . The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it." Yet the work was not to be done in his own strength. He might rely upon God's help, for God was with him. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."||

King Darius confirmed the decree of Cyrus, which he searched for and found. In the eighth year of his reign (B.C. 516) the second temple stood complete, and was solemnly dedicated to the worship of Jehovah; and the children of the

\* 2 Kings xvii. 24—41.

† See Haggai i. 4—11.

‡ Haggai i. 13, ii. 4, 5.

§ Haggai ii. 9.

|| Zech. iii. 6—9.

captivity kept the Passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month with joy and thanksgiving.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON III.

*Question.* Who was reigning at Babylon when the appointed seventy years of the captivity had passed?

*Q.* What had been prophesied concerning him?

*Q.* Did Cyrus fulfil this prophecy?

*Q.* What number of Jewish exiles set out for Jerusalem?

*Q.* Who was the leader of the expedition?

*Q.* Was he a good prince?

*Q.* In what state was their country when the exiles returned to it?

*Q.* What was their first task?

*Q.* How did they proceed, and what progress did they make?

*Q.* Did they encounter any difficulties?

*Q.* How did the Samaritans hinder the work?

*Q.* Did God punish the Jews for their lack of faith and zeal and perseverance?

*Q.* Did they understand why God thus afflicted them?

*Q.* Was the rebuilding of the temple re-commenced?

*Q.* What other prophets spoke words of exhortation and encouragement?

*Q.* What king confirmed the decree of Cyrus?

*Q.* When was this second temple finished?

### LESSON IV.

Second return of Jewish exiles to Jerusalem—Ezra—State of the Jews of the restoration—Ezra's mission—Its effect—Nehemiah appointed governor of Judæa—Memorable events—Nehemiah's second administration—Malachi—His picture of the Jewish people.

*Read Ezra vii.—x. ; Nehemiah.*

In the seventh year of the Persian king, Artaxerxes Longimanus, Ezra the scribe, a man of priestly descent, set out from Babylon with 6,000 of his countrymen for Jerusalem—a second company of Jewish exiles returning to the land of their forefathers. For sixty years the second temple had been consecrated to the worship of God, but the religious life of the people whom Zerubbabel and Joshua had led back to Canaan was then in a state of rapid decay. Both Zerubbabel and Joshua were dead, and the rulers of the Jewish people who had succeeded them were not men of like zeal, faith, and holiness. The descendants of Joshua the high priest were unworthy both of him and of their office, and so the example of those in authority had no influence for good upon the people. By their marriages with the Canaanites the holy seed were gradually mingling with the heathen, learning their ways, and ceasing to be God's separate and peculiar people.

It was Ezra's mission to convert his countrymen from their evil ways to the law of the Lord their God. The prophet rent his garments, and by other outward signs of grief and astonishment testified to the people assembled in the courts of the temple how deeply they had sinned. There, "casting himself down before the house of God," he wept and prayed till the time of the evening sacrifice, and confessed the sins of the people before God, and the people assembled before him—"a very great congregation of men and women"—"wept very sore." And with this repentance came a reformation. The priests had set the example of forbidden marriages, but the strange wives were put away, and the people hearkened to all the words of Ezra in fear and in trembling, and answered with a loud voice, "As thou hast said, so must we do."

But though the temple had been rebuilt and Ezra led the people to a repentance that showed its reality not by words only, but by deeds, by casting out from their midst all things that offended and were contrary to the law of God, yet Jerusalem itself lay desolate. Its walls were still broken down, while heaps of ruins and rubbish were to be seen on every side. Thus the city and the temple were exposed to the depredations and insults from the many hostile and marauding tribes that overran the land, and Jerusalem offered no security to its inhabitants. At last, thirteen years after the mission of Ezra, God raised up another man of like devotion to do His will. This was Nehemiah, who, though a Jew, held the high office of cup-bearer to Artaxerxes, King of Persia; but more than this, he was a man of prayer and faith, and devoted to God's service. He mourned over the state of Jerusalem, and when the king inquired the cause of his sadness he showed him the reason of it. Artaxerxes at once appointed Nehemiah governor of Judæa, and thus he was able to gratify his longing to build the walls of Jerusalem. This great work he took so zealously in hand that notwithstanding hindrances without and faction within, the walls were rebuilt, and the gates hung, and the towers set up in fifty-two days. Several other memorable events happened during the twelve years which form the first period of Nehemiah's government.

1. In the month of Tisri, the first month of the Jewish civil year (Sept.-Oct. B.C. 444), the whole congregation assembled together and listened with devout attention to their teacher, Ezra, who read and expounded the Scriptures of the Old Covenant (the Old Testament), which he had revised and corrected.

2. Then the joyous Feast of Tabernacles was kept with all the splendour and rejoicing of old times.

3. The festival was followed by a fast. "The people then confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers, and worshipped the Lord, and solemnly renewed their covenant with God, promising to serve the Lord and to keep His commandments."\*

4. Lastly, there was a joyous festival to celebrate the *Dedication of the walls* of the city.

But Nehemiah was still subject to King Artaxerxes, and he returned to Persia in the thirty-second year of the reign of that king, B.C. 433.†

After some years Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, when he found that both priests and people had forsaken God's law and were neglecting the temple worship. The prophet Malachi was his helper in this his second reformation, and in his writings—the book of Malachi—he denounces the special sins of these times. Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets, and for this reason he was called the "seal" of the prophets, for his words confirm and seal, as it were, the words of all the prophets who preceded him. Malachi has left in his writings a true but very dismal picture of the state of the Jewish people at the time he wrote, and when Nehemiah was carrying on his great work of political and religious reformation.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON IV.

*Question.* Who conducted a second company of Jewish exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem?

*Q.* How long was this after the consecration of the second temple, and what was the state of the Jews in the Holy Land?

*Q.* Did Ezra try to alter this state of things?

*Q.* Did the people hearken to Ezra?

*Q.* Did this repentance lead to a reformation?

*Q.* Who, some time after the mission of Ezra, did God raise up for the help of His people?

*Q.* Did King Artaxerxes favour Nehemiah's patriotic desires?

*Q.* What was Nehemiah's great work?

*Q.* What other memorable events happened during the twelve years which form the first period of Nehemiah's government?

*Q.* When did Nehemiah return to Babylon?

*Q.* What was the state of the people when, after some years, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem?

*Q.* Who helped Nehemiah in this his second reformation?

\* See Neh. ix.

† Neh. xiii. 6.

## LESSON V.

Judæa under Persian and Grecian rulers—Persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, Mattathias.

*Read 1 Macc. i., ii.; Dan. viii. 9; 2 Macc. v.*

AFTER the times of Nehemiah and Malachi Judæa was under the dominion of Persia till B.C. 332; but very little is known of its history during that period. The Grecian empire then succeeded to the Persian. The "he-goat from the west" smote the ram, "brake his two horns and cast him down to the ground," or, in other words, Alexander the Great, the King of Macedonia, conquered Persia, put an end to the empire of the Medes and Persians, and founded his own Grecian empire upon it, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel\* and the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, in which the kingdom of brass succeeded to the empire of silver.† 100,000 Jews were transported by the Grecian conqueror to help to people his newly-built city of Alexandria in Egypt; so that now, besides the Jews living in their own land of Palestine, colonies of Jews were settled in Babylon and in Egypt. From this time, indeed, great numbers of Jews lived abroad, and they are known in history as the Jews of the Dispersion. But though no longer inhabiting the same land, their religion united them more strongly to each other, and made them more truly brothers than was the case with any other people in the world.

After the death of Alexander the Jews of Palestine were for a time under the dominion of either the Greek kings of Egypt or the Greek kings of Syria, and, too often, the degenerate high priests of the Jews courted their power by the adoption of Greek, and therefore heathen, games and customs. Divine judgments most surely followed the national apostacy;‡ and the next landmark in Jewish history is the terrible persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Greek King of Syria, whose wickedness, profanity, and cruelty have perhaps never been surpassed by any human being. He was the Antichrist of the Old Testament, and foreshadowed the yet more terrible Antichrist of the last times. In the year B.C. 170 he not only plundered the temple of the sacred vessels and immense treasures in gold and silver, but he profaned it by commanding "a great sow to be sacrificed on the altar of burnt-offerings," and the liquor in which its flesh was boiled "to be sprinkled

\* Dan. viii. 5—7.

† Dan. ii. 31—35.

‡ Wicked men of Israel "made a covenant with the heathen" (1 Maccabees i. 11).



over every part of the temple; and thus desecrated with the most odious defilement the sacred place which the Jews had considered for centuries the one holy spot in all the universe." 40,000 Jews were slaughtered in the streets of Jerusalem, and as many more sold as slaves. But the persecution that followed two years afterwards (B.C. 168) was still more dreadful; for Antiochus having decreed that all the people under his dominion should have but one law and one religion, the Jews had to choose between apostacy and death by the most cruel tortures. The martyrdom of Eleazar, an aged scribe, and of seven brothers and their mother, who chose rather to suffer the most excruciating torments than to purchase life and such wealth and honour as the king could bestow, is recorded in the Second Book of Maccabees.\* Yet we are told that "many of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed to idols, and profaned the Sabbath," for the decree had gone forth, and was strictly carried out by Apollonius, the king's general, that all who refused to do these things, "and to make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation," should be put to death.† Women who caused their children to be circumcised were hanged with their children round their necks. Apollonius commenced a slaughter of the people of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, and the streets ran with blood. The holy feasts of the Jews were replaced by the profane and wicked feasts of the heathen, and thus by all those means the Jewish nation and worship were in danger of extermination.‡ But now, by means of heroic men, God wrought a deliverance for His people. Mattathias, a priest who lived with his five sons in Modin, a town on the sea-coast, was fired with indignation at "the blasphemies that were committed in Judah and Jerusalem. He said, Woe is me! Wherefore was I born to see this misery of my people and of the holy city, and to dwell there when it was delivered into the hands of the enemy, and the sanctuary into the hand of strangers? . . . To what end, therefore, shall we live any longer?" He and his sons rent their clothes, and put on sackcloth, and mourned very sore, and refused to sacrifice to idols; and he slew an apostate Jew who was about to sacrifice according to the king's command. He killed besides the king's commissioner, who compelled men to sacrifice to the heathen gods, and then, having called with a loud voice to all who were "zealous of the law and maintained the covenant" to follow him, he fled with his sons to the mountains.§

\* 2 Macc. vi. 18—31, vii.

† 1 Macc. i. 43—50.

‡ Milman's *History of the Jews*.

§ 1 Macc. ii. 1—28.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON V.

*Question.* How long did Judæa continue under the dominion of Persia?

*Q.* What happened then?

*Q.* What scripture did this fulfil?

*Q.* How were the Jews of Palestine ruled after the death of Alexander the Great?

*Q.* Did they preserve their own institutions?

*Q.* What judgments followed upon national apostacy?

*Q.* Can you relate some particulars of these persecutions?

*Q.* Did a yet more terrible persecution follow?

*Q.* Did many of the Israelites apostatise?

*Q.* Were there any faithful unto death?

*Q.* Did many perish in this persecution?

*Q.* In what way did God at last deliver His people?

### LESSON VI.

Death of Mattathias—Judas Maccabæus becomes leader of his people—His victories—Re-dedication of the temple—Feast of Lights—Judas recognised as governor of Judæa by the Syrian king—His death—Jonathan succeeds him—Jonathan first priest-king of the Asmonæan line—His death—Simon, second son of Mattathias, succeeds him—Character of his reign—State of the Jews—Simon assassinated—John Hyrcanus succeeds—Makes his country independent of Syria—Antipater—Herod.

*Read 1 Macc. i.—xvi.*

FROM time to time Mattathias and his followers suddenly poured down from their hiding-places and strongholds in the mountains and fell upon the enemy. They destroyed the heathen altars, re-established the worship of the synagogues, punished apostates, and enforced the national laws. They "smote sinful men in their anger, and wicked men in their wrath," and then retreated to the hill country. In the year 166 B.C. Mattathias, feeling that the time drew near that he should die, made his third son, Judas, who had been mighty and strong from his youth up, captain of his followers, and he charged him to fight the battle of his people. Judas Maccabæus soon proved his fitness to be the leader of those patriots who fought for God and their country. "In his acts he was like a lion. He pursued the wicked, and sought them out, and became renowned, and gat him great honour. The wicked shrunk for fear of him, and all the workers of iniquity were troubled."\* By his victories over the Syrians at Beth-horon, at Emmaus, and at Bethsura, he freed his country from the yoke of the foreigner. The profaned and half-ruined temple he cleansed and re-dedicated (B.C. 164). A joyous feast of

\* 1 Macc. iii. 4—6.

thanksgiving, which was called the "Feast of Lights," celebrated the event; and from this re-dedication festival the recovered independence of the Jews may be said to commence. Judas Maccabæus was for a time recognised as governor of Judæa by the Syrian king; but he died at last fighting against them at great odds at Elusa. His brother Jonathan now became the leader of the nation, and taking to himself the office of high priest, he became the first priest-king of the Asmonæan line.\* He lost his life by the treachery of Tryphon, a Syrian officer (B.C. 144), who, knowing that Jonathan would thwart his design of seizing the Syrian throne for himself, entrapped him into his power, and then put him to death.† All Israel made great lamentation for him, and bewailed him many days. Simon, the second son of Mattathias, a man of counsel, now stepped into his brother's place, and became ruler of the Jews. He took the part of Demetrius, the lawful King of Syria, against the usurper Tryphon, and Demetrius recognised the independence of Judæa. "Thus the yoke of the heathen was taken away from Israel in the first year of Simon the high priest, the governor and leader of the Jews."‡ Simon's reign was peaceful and prosperous. "The land of Judæa was quiet all the days of Simon." He sought the good of his countrymen, and was honourable in all his acts; he enlarged the bounds of his nation, and did much for its internal security. He secured the alliance of the Romans, fortified some of his frontier cities, beautified the temple, and administered justice impartially. The Jewish historian of these times has left us a very pleasing picture of the happiness of the people as the result of Simon's wise measures, for he says: "The ancient men sat all in the streets communing together of good things, and the young men put on glorious and warlike apparel . . . ; and Israel rejoiced with great joy, for every man sat under his vine and his fig-tree, and there was none to fray them."§ But Simon himself and his elder son were basely assassinated by his son-in-law, Ptolemy, who conspired to usurp his father-in-law's throne. Simon was succeeded by his younger son, John Hyrcanus, who after a time made his country again independent of Syria, and for twenty-nine years reigned the undisturbed ruler of his people.

Hyrcanus took Sichem, the city of the Samaritans, and

\* "Asmonæan," a designation derived from the proper name of the family. They were also called Maccabees, from the surname of Judas—"Judas Maccabæus," Judas the Hammerer.

† See 1 Macc. xii., xiii. 1—23.

‡ 1 Macc. xiii. 41, 42.

§ 1 Macc. xiv. 4—12.

utterly destroyed their temple on Mount Gerizim, which was intended to rival the temple of the Jews in Jerusalem. From the time that the Jews refused the help of the Samaritans in rebuilding the temple (because they were not a Jewish people, but the descendants of Jewish colonists\*), the Jews and the Samaritans had bitterly hated each other; and Hyrcanus, the prince of the Jews, greatly pleased his people by his chastisement of "the foolish people of Sichem" ("that dwell in Sichem"), as the Samaritans were called by the writer of the Book of Ecclesiasticus. This book was written about this time, and it gives expression to the religious ideas of Jews at this period of their history.

Hyrcanus likewise subdued the Idumæans, or Edomites, who had possessed themselves of the southern portion of Palestine during the absence of the Jews in Babylon. They were obliged either to conform to the Jewish faith and customs or to leave the country; and choosing the former alternative, they were thus incorporated into the Jewish nation, and afterwards gave rulers to the Jews in the person of Herod, called the Great, and other members of his family.

After John Hyrcanus, who died B.C. 109, the Asmonæan or Maccabæan princes soon became weak and wholly unlike the early heroes of their race. Their quarrels gave the Romans an excuse for taking the government of Judæa into their own hands, and they ruled it by means of kings or governors of their own choosing. The first of these rulers was Antipater the Idumæan. His son Herod, who had married Mariamne, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus II., was by favour of the Romans made King of the Jews (B.C. 40); but as Herod was still regarded as an independent sovereign, the sceptre had not departed from Judah when the Messiah was born in Bethlehem, and God comforted His people and warned the Jews as a nation by "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert highway for our God." †

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VI.

*Question.* How did Mattathias conduct his warfare against the heathen persecutors of his country and his religion?

*Q.* Did this patriotic movement cease with the death of Mattathias?

*Q.* Did Judas prove his fitness to lead those who fought for God and their country?

*Q.* How was the restoration of the temple celebrated?

*Q.* Did the Syrian king recognise the authority of Judas Maccabæus?

*Q.* Who succeeded Judas as leader of the nation?

*Q.* How did Jonathan lose his life?

\* 2 Kings xvii. 24—41.

† Isa. xl. 1, 2.

- Q. Who succeeded Jonathan as ruler of the Jews?  
 Q. Was his reign prosperous?  
 Q. How did Simon lose his life?  
 Q. Who succeeded Simon?  
 Q. Was John Hyrcanus a successful ruler?  
 Q. What people did he subdue, and what choice did he give the Idumæans?  
 Q. Was John Hyrcanus the last of the Maccabæan, or Asmonæan, kings?  
 Q. Into whose hands did the government of the country pass?

## LESSON VII.

Messianic teaching of the Old Testament.

ALL through the Old Testament there is a gradual unfolding of God's purpose of sending a Deliverer (a Messiah or Anointed One) to redeem the world—a confirmation of His promise that “the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.” At first it is very dim—it is seen through a glass darkly; but as the roll of prophecy opens out it gets clearer and clearer, until, in Isaiah, the mystery of a suffering Messiah, *of victory through suffering* is plainly revealed.

This, however, was *hinted* at in the very first promise of a Messiah,\* for when God pronounced judgment on the serpent immediately after the fall, He said to him, “Thou shalt bruise his heel”—the wicked one was so far to prevail against the seed of the woman.

In the blessing of Shem† there was wrapped up a blessing for all nations, for from him Messiah was to spring.

To Abraham likewise it was plainly promised that in his seed “all the nations of the earth should be blessed,”‡ and in God's dealings with the “father of the faithful” the life and sufferings of Christ were typified. Abraham was to leave his father's house, to be holy and separate from the rest of mankind; while in the demanded offering up of Isaac, the idea of sacrifice, of shedding of blood, of the innocent dying for the guilty, of a life given up and given back, was distinctly foreshadowed. Abraham saw a Divine meaning in God's dealings with him, and so by faith he saw Christ's day and rejoiced in it.

Jacob was inspired to declare that the sceptre should not depart from Judah till Shiloh, the peaceful One, should come§; and Moses prophesied that the Lord, the God of Israel, should

\* Gen. iii. 15. † Gen. ix. 26. ‡ Gen. xxii. 18. § Gen. xlix. 10.

raise up a prophet like unto Himself,\* One who should be Leader and Lawgiver and Mediator; who should stand between God and His people and reconcile them to God. And "the Prophet that should come into the world" the Jews understood to mean the Messiah.†

The great festivals had a Messianic teaching, while the tabernacle and its services testified of the coming One, and typified things that should be fulfilled in Christ and His Church..

In the Feast of the Passover the Paschal Lamb without blemish—chosen before and separate—was the type of Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"—the Lamb of God slain for the sin of the world,‡ whose "precious blood has redeemed us and delivered us from the bondage of sin." So on Easter Day we sing, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." When the Israelites after their long wanderings passed the Jordan and first entered the Land of Promise and ate of its corn they kept the Passover; so Christians, after passing through this world and over the waters of death, look for an entrance into the heavenly Canaan through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the second great Jewish feast, the Feast of Harvest or of Weeks (called in the New Testament by its Greek name, the Feast of Pentecost), "the gathered-in harvest and the loaves baked from the new corn were the type of the work of Jesus Christ receiving its crown and accomplishment in the descent of the Holy Ghost."

Jesus referred, we may suppose, to two of the customs of the Feast of Tabernacles, or Harvest Home, when on the last day of its duration He said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" §; and, "I am the Light of the world."||

The tabernacle and its furniture was a type or shadow of the Good Thing which was to come. The tabernacle typified the presence of God. Its various kinds of sacrifices represented different aspects of Christ's One sacrifice. (See ante, p. 68, explanation of the Jewish sacrifices.) The high priest represented Christ Himself, the One true Priest; and the entrance of the high priest into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the sacrifice represented the entrance of Jesus Christ into the presence of God as our High Priest, with His own blood of atonement. To Christ then did the Mosaic law and ritual point.

\* Deut. xviii. 15—18.

† 1 Cor. v. 7, 8; 1 Pet. i. 19, 20.

‡ St. John viii. 12.

† St. John vi. 14.

§ St. John vii. 37.

They were but shadows of things to come ; but the shadow has now given place to the substance, the hope to the reality.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VII.

*Question.* What do we meet with all through the Old Testament ?

*Q.* And what becomes clearer and clearer as the roll of prophecy unfolds ?

*Q.* Give some instances of the Messianic teaching of the Old Testament ?

*Q.* Had the great festivals a Messianic teaching ?

*Q.* Did the tabernacle and its services point to the promised Messiah ?

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### LESSON VIII.

Messianic teaching of the Old Testament continued—The promise to David—Messianic prophecies of Isaiah—Victory through suffering—other Messianic prophecies.

IN God's promise to David the true nature of the Messiah and the Messiah's kingdom was more clearly revealed than it had been in any previous prophecy or promise. David's kingdom and David's throne were to be established for ever.\* God was to be the Father of that Son of David whose kingdom should last for ever, who, though David's son, was likewise his Lord ; who should die,† yet as God's Holy One should rise again before His body had seen corruption.‡ The Messiah's descent from a particular family, from the family of David, as well as His eternal Kingship, His eternal Priesthood, and His Godhead were thus all made known to David.

1. Isaiah foretold§ that a Forerunner should prepare the way of the Messiah, and make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ||

2. *That the Messiah should be born from a Virgin.* ¶

3. *The baptism of the Messiah by the Holy Ghost.* \*\*

4. *The work of the Messiah.* ††

5. *His miracles of healing.*

6. *His sufferings, outward state, and final triumph. The sufferings of the Messiah :* " Stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted," " wounded for our transgressions," " bruised for our iniquities," bearing " the stripes by which we are healed," " oppressed," " afflicted," " brought as a lamb to the slaughter." The reason of His sufferings: " The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" ; " for the transgression of My people was He stricken " ; He was " an offering for sin." *His outward state:*

\* 2 Sam. vii. 16 ; 1 Chron. xvii. 12.

† Ps. xvi. 10.

‡ Ps. xvi. 10.

§ Isa. liii.

|| Isa. xl. 3—11.

¶ Isa. vii.

\*\* Isa. xlii. 1, lxi. 1.

†† Isa. xxv. 5, 6.

"A root out of a dry ground"; "no form nor comeliness"; "despised and rejected of men." *His final victory*: "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied"; "I will divide Him a portion with the great."\* So plainly, indeed, does Isaiah here prophesy of the future Messiah that "he seems," it has been said, "to perform the part of an evangelist rather than of a prophet." Other prophets—Hosea, Micah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel—testified likewise "concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."

Daniel even foretold the time of the Messiah's advent. He was made to understand that 70 weeks† were determined upon, that from the command to restore and build Jerusalem‡ unto the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, should be seven weeks and three score and two weeks,§ when Messiah was to be cut off by a violent death, the sacrifice and the oblation were to cease, and by-and-by the city and sanctuary would be destroyed. All this came to pass. Christ was offered for the redemption of His people, and after an interval of grace the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.

Lastly, by Malachi, the "seal" of the prophets, Christ Himself declares, "I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me." The "messenger" who did prepare the way of the Lord at His first advent was John the Baptist, though more than four hundred years were to pass before his warning voice was heard in the wilderness of Judæa, and for the history of His mission we must turn to the pages of the New Testament.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VIII.

*Question.* Was the true nature of the Messiah and the Messiah's kingdom more clearly revealed in God's promises to David than in any previous prophecy?

*Q.* Who was to be the Father of that Son of David whose kingdom should last for ever?

*Q.* Did Isaiah prophesy many things of the Messiah?

*Q.* Did other prophets as well prophesy about the Messiah?

*Q.* In the prophecy of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, is there any reference to the Messiah?

\* Isa. liii.

† Weeks of years, a day for a year.

‡ Cf. See the four edicts relating to Jerusalem: were the edict of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1—4, vi. 3—5); the edict of Darius (Ezra vi. 1—12); Artaxerxes to Ezra (vii. 11—26); Artaxerxes to Nehemiah (ii. 1); and that of Artaxerxes to Ezra, B.C. 458 (Ezra vii. 14).

§ Sixty-nine weeks of years agrees most nearly with the coming of Christ, and approximation only is intended.



## Part III.

### NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY.

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#### LESSON I.

The New Testament—Fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament in Jesus Christ—Distinctive characteristics of the four Gospels.

THUS far the history of God's dealings with men has been made known to us by the Old Testament Scriptures. It informed us of man's creation in a state of innocence and happiness, of his fall through the temptation of Satan, the enemy, the wicked one, called also the Old Serpent and the Devil. Our first parents expelled from the garden of Eden, and become subject to sin and death, had for their only consolation God's promise of the restoration of mankind through a Deliverer in the assurance that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and the rest of the Old Testament is but a constant pointing to that Promised One, by types and prophecies, and a gradual revelation of more and more about the Messiah as the time of His first advent into the world drew near.

The New Testament is the history of the fulfilment of these prophecies in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the setting up of His kingdom, the Church, and a setting forth of Christian doctrine by men who, like the writers of the Old Testament, wrote by inspiration of the Spirit of God. In this way and for this reason the books of the Old and New Testaments are different from all other books.

The four Gospel narratives taken together furnish us all that is most important for us to know about our Lord's teaching and His life upon earth. And just as in different portraits of a person we get varying views of the same face, so each evangelist draws a somewhat different aspect of the Redeemer.

St. Matthew shows Him to us as *THE CHRIST, the Messiah and King of Israel*. St. Matthew wrote in the first place for his own countrymen, the Jews, and to prove to them that Jesus

of Nazareth was their long-expected Messiah—that all the Messianic prophecies had been fulfilled in Him: he makes some forty-eight quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures, using the words, “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken.” Thus our Lord’s wonderful birth, the place of His birth, the circumstances of His infancy, His residence in Galilee, His sympathy with the sick and mournful, His mode of teaching by parables, His riding into Jerusalem on an ass, His rejection by the Jews, are all cited by St. Matthew as accomplishments of the following prophecies: “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel.”\* “And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule My people Israel.”† “The land of Zabulon . . . Galilee of the Gentiles. The people which sat in darkness saw great light.”‡ “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”§ “I will open My mouth in parables.”|| “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.”¶ “Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head stone of the corner.”\*\*

St. Mark depicts our Lord as *God’s Holy Servant Jesus*—as the worker of miracles, the Son of God with power.

In St. Luke’s gospel, written for the Gentiles, we behold Jesus especially as the *Son of man*—the Perfect or Ideal Man—the Friend and Redeemer of all men.

St. John completes this fourfold aspect of our Lord by portraying Him as “the only-begotten Son of God,” “the Word,” which was “in the beginning with God,” and who “was God.” Thus St. John sets forth the Godhead of Christ, and in his Gospel he has recorded our Lord’s own words about His Person and mission: “If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also.”†† “I and My Father are One.”‡‡ “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.”§§ “I am the Resurrection and the Life.”||| St. John tells us, moreover, at the very beginning of his Gospel that Christ the Divine *Word* is the revealer of the Father—that He makes known to us the mind of God: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, *He hath declared Him*.”¶¶ “All things,” saith

\* St. Matt. i. 23; Isa. vii. 14.

† St. Matt. ii. 5, 6; Mic. v. 2.

‡ St. Matt. iv. 15, 16; Isa. ix. 1, 2. § St. Matt. viii. 17; Isa. liii. 4.

|| St. Matt. xiii. 35.

¶ St. Matt. xxi. 5.

\*\* St. Matt. xxi.

†† St. John viii. 19.

‡‡ St. John x. 30.

§§ St. John xiv. 9.

|| St. John xi. 25.

¶¶ St. John i. 18.

Christ, "that I have heard of My Father *I have made known unto you.*" \*

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON I.

*Question.* What promise does the Old Testament inform us was made to man immediately after the fall?

*Q.* And what mainly is the subsequent teaching of the Old Testament?

*Q.* What does the New Testament make known to us?

*Q.* What prophecies does St. Matthew cite as having been fulfilled in Jesus Christ?

*Q.* In what special manner does each one of the evangelists portray our Lord?

### LESSON II.

The Incarnation—Herod—Independence of Judah passing away—Expectation of the Jews—The faithful remnant—Zacharias and the angel Gabriel.

*Read St. Luke i. 5—25.*

At last in the fulness of time the great mystery that had been hid in Christ from the foundation of the world—the incarnation, or *the coming of the Son of God in the flesh*—was manifested

Then, as our Church teaches us, God and man became "One Christ," "not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God." Thus the Second Person of the Holy Trinity took our whole human nature and so became "perfect God and perfect man : of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting."

God the Son laid aside His glory—emptied Himself of it ; and though in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, He took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself and became "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

As man, therefore, He possessed a body such as man possesses, and subject therefore to pain, weariness, hunger, and thirst. As man He was endowed likewise with a human soul, and so, like us, he could feel joy and sorrow, pity, indignation, and be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

As God, life and death were in His hand, and all nature was subject to His power. As the Eternal Son of God He died for us, and His death and passion availed to work out our redemption—to atone for us.

We have seen that the Jews, after eighty years of captivity, were permitted to return to their own land, and that after many years of trouble and persecution, sent them as a punishment for their many backslidings, they won their independence under their native princes, the Maccabees ; but at the time of which

\* St. John xv. 15.

we write, the Idumæan family of Herod had risen to power, and Herod, called the Great, was king of the Jews—though he was king only by favour of the Romans, who were drawing the whole civilised world into their empire. Thus the prediction of Jacob was fulfilled: the sceptre had not departed from Judah when Shiloh came; but it was fast slipping out of her grasp, and the Jews were anxiously looking for a Messiah who should be both King and Conqueror—a Messiah who should come in might and majesty, smiting their foes and exalting them as a nation. Yet there were a few amongst them who served God, and were deeply sensible of the corruption and wickedness around them. They waited for the consolation of Israel, and were ready to believe in a Messiah who, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah, should come in meekness and humility, as a Sufferer and a Sin-bearer to save God's people from their sins and to reconcile them to God. To this faithful remnant belonged Zacharias, an aged priest, and his wife Elisabeth, who lived in the hill country of Judæa, "they were both righteous before God;" but they were childless—a great affliction amongst the Jews—and now in their old age it did not seem likely that their prayers for the removal of this affliction would be answered. But when God seems not to hear His people's prayers, it is sometimes that He may answer them more fully and more gloriously. Delay with God is not always denial, and Zacharias and his wife rejoiced at last, and found out that God had not really turned a deaf ear to the voice of their supplications. How did this come to pass? St. Luke tells us that as Zacharias was "executing the priest's office before God" in the temple at Jerusalem, and was offering incense on the golden altar in the Holy Place, he saw an angel of the Lord standing on the right hand of the altar, and when Zacharias saw him he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, "Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth." Why was this? It was because the son of Zacharias was to be the Forerunner of the Messiah, and therefore the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. He was "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." This was his great and glorious mission, but Zacharias could not at once believe what the angel told him. It was all so wonderful—the vision of the bright angel, the message of "glad tidings," that perhaps Zacharias thought it was a dream. He wanted the faith of Abraham, so he said to the angel, "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years."

And the angel answering, said, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."\* The sign was a punishment for his unbelief; and when at last he came out to the wondering people to give them the priestly blessing he was speechless.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON II.

*Question.* What great mystery was revealed and accomplished by the birth of Jesus Christ?

*Q.* Explain this mystery in the words of the Church of England?

*Q.* What did Christ do for us?

*Q.* When Jesus Christ was born had the sceptre departed from Judah?

*Q.* Were the Jews at this time looking for a Messiah, and what sort of a Messiah did they wish for and expect?

*Q.* Were there any amongst them who had a more spiritual view than others?

*Q.* Who was Zacharias, and what particular trial had he?

*Q.* Did God at last hear their prayers and send them a son? and in what way was he to be remarkable?

*Q.* Did Zacharias believe the angel's message?

*Q.* Did God give him a sign?

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### LESSON III.

God's message to the Virgin Mary—Mary and Elisabeth—Mary's hymn of praise—A son born to Zacharias—He is called John—Zacharias' hymn of praise.

*Read St. Luke i. 26—80.*

It was the angel Gabriel who more than 500 years before his appearance to Zacharias was sent to Daniel to make him understand the time of the Messiah's advent; and now, when that time had come—six months after his message of "good tidings" to Zacharias—he was sent to Mary, a humble virgin of Nazareth, with an announcement far more wonderful. He said to her, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women . . . for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. . . . And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Unlike Zacharias, she believed at

\* St. Luke i. 5—22.

once the words of the angel, and giving herself up to God submitted to Him in all things.

After this Mary went "with haste" to visit her kinswoman Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias. If Elisabeth lived in Hebron it was a journey of about one hundred miles from Nazareth. And when she entered the house and saluted Elisabeth, Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and said to Mary, "Blessed art thou among women." And Mary being filled with the Holy Ghost burst out into a beautiful song of praise, saying, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." This song of praise we call the *Magnificat*, or Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and we sing it in our churches at evening service.



ELIZABETH AND MARY.

Soon after Mary had returned to Nazareth Elisabeth's child was born, and Elisabeth's neighbours and kinsfolk rejoiced with her that God had heard her prayers, and in so wonderful a way manifested His mercy towards her; and when on the eighth day they met together to circumcise the child according to the custom of the Jews, they would have called him by his father's name Zacharias, and they wondered much when Elisabeth said, "He shall be called John." "There is none of thy kindred," they answered, "that is called by that name." But when they inquired of Zacharias by signs (for he was still dumb) he wrote, saying, "His name is John," for the angel had said, "Thou shalt call his name John." Then was his

mouth opened and his tongue loosed, and he spake and praised God, and being filled with the Holy Ghost prophesied that his child should be called "the prophet of the Highest," and that he should "go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways."\* This beautiful hymn of praise is called the *Benedictus*, and it is sung in our churches at morning service.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON III.

*Question.* To whom was the angel Gabriel sent more than 500 years before the time of Zacharias, and for what purpose?

*Q.* To whom was the same angel sent six months after his appearance to Zacharias, and why?

*Q.* How did Mary receive this message?

*Q.* Who did Mary visit shortly after this wonderful event?

*Q.* How did Elisabeth greet Mary?

*Q.* How did Mary reply to her?

*Q.* Do we use Mary's hymn of praise in our churches?

*Q.* What happened soon after Mary returned to Nazareth from her visit to Elisabeth?

*Q.* What happened when Elisabeth's child was named?

*Q.* Do we use likewise Zacharias' inspired song of praise in our churches?

### LESSON IV.

God's message to Joseph of Nazareth—Birth of Jesus Christ at Bethlehem—The shepherds of Bethlehem—Jesus circumcised—Dedication in the temple—Simeon—Anna—Services of the church—The wise men—The holy family fly to Egypt—Massacre of the innocents.

*Read St. Matt. i. and ii. 1—18.*

MARY, who was to become the mother of our Lord, was betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth, who, like Mary, was of the house of David—David was their forefather; and soon after Mary's return to Nazareth from visiting Elisabeth, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."† Joseph now knew that she whom he loved was pure in heart, and specially honoured by God—that her first-born Son, Jesus, would be the Son of God; and by-and-by in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Herod "the Great," King of the Jews, and while Augustus Cæsar was Emperor of Rome, the first-born Son of Mary—the Son of God—was born into the world.

But this great event, the greatest in all history, the birth of the long-promised Saviour, took place, not at Nazareth, but at Bethlehem, and so the predictions of the prophets were fulfilled: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel," which, being

\* St. Luke i. 57—76

† St. Matt. i. 20.

interpreted, is God with us."\* "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule My people Israel."†

At this time the King of the Jews was little more than a governor appointed by the Emperor of Rome. So when the emperor issued a decree that all the countries in which he had any power should be taxed, that the people should be numbered and enrolled—their names written down—the Jews had to obey the emperor's command. Now as Joseph belonged to Bethlehem he went there to be "taxed" with Mary his wife, and in the stable of the inn (which was probably a limestone cave)



THE SHEPHERDS RECEIVING THE GLAD TIDINGS.

Mary "brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger."‡ And God make known this wonderful birth to some shepherds who were keeping watch beside their flocks on the hills near Bethlehem. The angel of the Lord said to them, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger"; and then, the glory of the Lord still shining round about them in awful grandeur, and while they still trembled at the vision, "there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth

\* Isa. vii. 14; Mic. v. 2. † St. Matt. ii. 6. ‡ St. Luke ii. 1—7.



peace, goodwill toward men." As soon as the angels had departed the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem and found the Babe lying in a manger. They told Mary and Joseph and many others all the wonderful things that they had seen and heard, and then returned to their flocks glorifying and praising God.

As Jesus came to fulfil the law, to render a perfect obedience to God His Father in all things, He received the outward sign of circumcision. About six weeks after the birth of Jesus, Mary presented her offerings in the temple at Jerusalem, and there in His Father's house Jesus was dedicated to the Lord. Then the aged Simeon, who was a just man waiting for the consolation of Israel—for the Holy Ghost had revealed to him that he should see "the Lord Christ" before he died—



THE DEDICATION IN THE TEMPLE.

took Jesus in his arms and blessed Him, saying, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Simeon's hymn of mingled praise and prophecy we chant at evening service.

All the principal events in the life of our Lord are celebrated and brought to our remembrance one after the other during the whole year from Advent to Easter, and from Easter again to Advent, by the services of our Church.

While Mary and Joseph and the Holy Child Jesus still tarried at Bethlehem, wise men (Magi) came from some country farther east to Jerusalem to worship the infant Saviour. "Where is He," they said, "who is born King of the Jews? for

we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him." But when Herod heard this he was troubled. This mysterious child who was "born King of the Jews" might



THE WISE MEN GOING TO BETHLEHEM.

be the Messiah of Israel. Dissembling both his anger and his fears he inquired of the learned men of the Jews where Christ should be born, and then directed the wise men to Bethlehem, charging them to bring him word when they had found the



THE WISE MEN PRESENTING THEIR COSTLY GIFTS.

Child, that he too might go and worship Him.\* But the wise men being warned of God in a dream not to return to Herod, departed straight to their own land as soon as they had worshipped the infant Christ and presented to Him their costly gifts.

Then, when the wicked king saw that the wise men had departed without telling him where he might find Him who was "born King of the Jews" (and therefore hated by the Idumæan usurper Herod) he was exceeding wroth, and slew all the male children in and near Bethlehem, from two years old and under.

But Jesus (though not out of Herod's jurisdiction) was far away from Bethlehem; for Joseph, being warned by God in a



BETHLEHEM.

dream, had fled with Mary and the Holy Child from the place of Jesus' birth, and was hastening to take refuge in the land of Egypt. It would take them three days at least to reach the river that separates Palestine from Egypt; but the Lord protected them from the blind rage of the jealous and cruel tyrant who vainly sought the life of Him who was in truth "the only-begotten Son of God;" and He led them safely to the land of Egypt, where they dwelt till the death of Herod.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON IV.

*Question.* What happened at this time to Joseph the carpenter of Nazareth, to whom Mary was betrothed?

\* St. Matt. ii. 1—8.

*Q.* When was this wonderful Child (the Son of Mary and the Son of God) born into the world?

*Q.* Did this great event take place at Nazareth?

*Q.* To whom, and in what way, did God make known this wonderful birth?

*Q.* Did the shepherds go at once to seek the Infant Christ?

*Q.* Who besides the shepherds testified to Jesus being the Christ during His early infancy?

*Q.* Do we use Simeon's hymn of mingled praise and prophecy in our services?

*Q.* Who besides testified to the Infant Christ?

*Q.* Did King Herod hear of the birth of Christ, and what was the consequence?

## LESSON V.

Herod, called the Great—His crimes and death—The Holy Family return to Judæa—Return to Nazareth.

*Read St. Matt. ii. 19—23; St. Luke ii. 39, 40.*

FAR happier were the infant martyrs who had "glorified God by their deaths" than the tyrant who had filled Bethlehem with the lamentation and weeping of mothers, weeping for their children and refusing the comfort that availed not to restore their little ones to life.



MURDER OF THE INNOCENTS.

By this great crime he did no injury to "the young Child," but fulfilled the words of the prophet Jeremiah,\* which, though spoken in the first place of captive Israel, found their higher and more perfect meaning in the wailing of the mothers of

\* Jer. xxxi. 15.

Bethlehem for those babes whose lives had been given for Him who was by-and-by to give His own life for their redemption.

Herod was fast filling up the measure of his iniquities; the "Massacre of the Innocents" was nearly the last outburst of that brutal cruelty and murderous rage that had long been the terror of those around him. "His whole career was red with the blood of murder. He had massacred priests and nobles; he had decimated the Sanhedrim; he had caused the high priest, his brother-in-law, the young and noble Aristobulus, to be drowned in pretended sport before his eyes; he had ordered the strangulation of his favourite wife, the beautiful Asmonæan princess Miriamne, though she seems to have been the only human being whom he passionately loved. His sons Alexander,



THE RETURN TO NAZARETH.

Aristobulus, and Antipater, his uncle Joseph, Antigonus and Alexander, the uncle and father of his wife, his mother-in-law Alexandra, his kinsman Cortobanus, his friends Dositheus and Gadias, were but a few of the multitudes who fell victims to his sanguinary suspicions and guilty terrors."

It must have been very shortly after the murder of the innocents that Herod died. Only five days before his death he had made a frantic attempt at suicide, and had ordered the execution of his eldest son Antipater. Though smitten by the finger of God's wrath after seventy years of successful villainy—the wretched old man, whom men had called the Great, lay in savage frenzy awaiting his last hour.

Herod's death was the signal for the return of the Holy

Family to Judæa. Again at God's command Joseph was to "arise and take the young Child and His mother" and journey as God directed him. This time the journey, we may suppose, was one he would be very glad to undertake. He was to return to "the land of Israel." Once more in his native country, Joseph would have tarried at Bethlehem, but when he heard that Archelaus the son of Herod reigned in Judæa, he feared to make the city of his forefathers and the birthplace of Jesus his home, for Archelaus, like a true son of his father, was a man of cruelty and blood.

Once more following God's direction, Joseph "turned aside into the parts of Galilee." Journeying north through Samaria, and across the plain of Jezreel, and then taking a narrow mountain path, he would ascend to the hills of northern Galilee, where, high up on one of these, he would reach his former home, the remote and sequestered little town of Nazareth.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON V.

*Question.* What scripture did Herod fulfil by the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem?

*Q.* Can you repeat the words of the prophecy?

*Q.* Was this "Massacre of the Innocents" Herod's only crime?

*Q.* Was his latter end painful and terrible?

*Q.* For what event was his death the signal?

*Q.* Where did Joseph live on his return to his own country?

#### LESSON VI.

Jesus at Jerusalem—In the midst of the doctors—His holy obedience.

*Read St. Luke ii. 41—52.*

NAZARETH and the country around it are for ever sacred ground to Christians, for here Jesus passed most of His life from infancy to manhood. It was His home for nearly thirty years—until He left it for Capernaum; and wherever we roam in or around the little town—whether we climb the hill that rises some 500 feet above it, or roam about its fields and gardens, or linger under the shade of its fig-trees and olive-trees, or descend into the valley beneath—we tread, as it were, in the very footsteps of our Lord.

But only once during the many years He passed here do we get even a glimpse of the Holy One. We know only that "the Child grew, and waxed strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him."\*

St. Luke is the only one of the evangelists who mentions even a single incident of our Lord's life in boyhood or in youth,

\* St. Luke ii. 40.

and this is His first journey to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary to the feast of the Passover. This, as we have seen, was the most important of the three great annual festivals of the Jews—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles—when every male Israelite of twelve years old and upwards was to present himself before the Lord in His temple. St. Luke tells us that Joseph and Mary “went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover,” and when Jesus “was twelve years old”—when He had completed His twelfth year—He went up with them to the holy festival. This is exactly what we might have expected, for when a Jewish boy completed his twelfth year he was presented to the Lord, and received into the congregation by a solemn service, just as Christian children in these days are put



NAZARETH.

in full possession of all the privileges of the Christian Church by the apostolic rite of Confirmation. But if this was a great event in the life of the ordinary Jewish boy, how much more so was it memorable in the early life of Jesus. He would see for the first time the holy city of Jerusalem, and His Father's House, the second temple, which His presence was to make glorious; and He would behold for the first time the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, the type or foreshadowing of His own sacrifice, when He, the true Paschal Lamb, should take away the sin of the world by the sacrifice of Himself.

It was a distance of about eight miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem. Descending from their mountain home by the

narrow footway that led down to the great plain of Jezreel, they must have rested the first night at En-Gannim, and their second halting-place would probably be near Shechem, in Samaria, in the valley that lies between the mountains Ebal and Gerizim ; and then journeying on past Shiloh, and Gibeah of Saul, and Bethel, they would on the third or fourth day come within sight of the gilded roofs of the great temple in Jerusalem. Whether during the week that the feast lasted they dwelt within the city, or lodged in a booth with the thousands who encamped outside its walls, we know not ; but when the week of the feast was over, and the band of returning pilgrims had started on their homeward journey, "the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem," though "Joseph and His mother knew it not," for they supposed Him to be "in the company." No son of Herod was now reigning in Jerusalem, for Archelaus



GOING TO JERUSALEM.

had so well imitated the crimes and tyranny of his father Herod that the emperor had put an end to his misrule by deposing him and annexing the province of Judæa to the Roman Empire ; but the Jews were ever ready to rebel against the rule of the Gentile governor, while he would not scruple to quell the spirit of revolt by an indiscriminate massacre of the Jewish people. When after a day's march the caravan (or joyous company) of pilgrims returning homewards halted for the night, Jesus was nowhere to be found, Joseph and His mother hastened back to Jerusalem to seek Him. But it was not till the third day (from the day of starting) that they found Him



in the temple\* "sitting in the midst of the doctors" (or learned men), "both hearing them and asking them questions." Seated at their feet, as we may suppose, He astonished all who heard Him by His understanding and answers. What these were we know not; but in His memorable answer to Mary's gentle chiding, "Did ye not know that I must be about *My Father's business?*" His first recorded words tell us that He was indeed the *Son of God*. Yet (wonderful example of holy obedience and infinite condescension), He returned to Nazareth with Joseph and His mother, and "*was subject to them.*" Then for eighteen years we know nothing of His life, except that He was "increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."



JESUS SITTING IN THE MIDST OF THE DOCTORS.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VI.

*Question.* Do the evangelists tell us much about the infancy of Jesus and His life at Nazareth for nearly thirty years?

*Q.* What is the brief account of Him during these years?

*Q.* Does St. Luke relate any single incident of Christ's early life?

*Q.* What happened to trouble Joseph and Mary after they had started upon their return home?

*Q.* Did they find Jesus, and how was He engaged?

*Q.* What wonderful instance of holy obedience and infinite condescension is recorded of Him?

*Q.* And then what is all the record we have of His life for eighteen years?

\* In one of the halls, schools, or lecture-rooms, adjoining the court of the Gentiles the learned men held discussions and taught.

## LESSON VII.

The voice in the wilderness—Christ's baptism—Christ's temptation—The Lamb of God—Andrew, John, Simon Peter, and Nathanael become the disciples of Jesus—Jesus at the marriage feast—His first miracle.

*Read St. Matt. i. 12, iii. 13—17, iv. 1—11; St. Mark i. 2—13;*

*St. Luke iii. 1—23, iv. 1—13; St. John i., ii. 1—12.*

THE quiet life at Nazareth passed away at last, and when Jesus was thirty years old (at the commencement of the thirty-first year of His human life) He knew that the time had come when He must manifest Himself to His chosen people. He would not come to them, as they vainly imagined, with the pomp and splendour of those kings whose kingdoms are of this world, but with the holy teaching and with the mighty power of the Son of God.

In one way the Jewish people were ready to receive Him, for they were looking and longing for the appearing of the Messiah, and they knew that the time for His appearing, according to the prophecies of the prophet Daniel, had fully come.

But instead of some warrior-king, whose sword should smite their enemies and restore their independence, a voice came from the wilderness of Judæa calling for national repentance and cleansing as a preparation for the Lord, and making straight His paths. This was the voice of John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias, the forerunner of One mightier than himself, who should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He told the priests and Levites and rulers of the Jews, who sent to ask him if he were indeed the Christ,\* "that prophet" whom Moses said God should raise up like unto Himself:—No, he was not the Christ; but he said, "There standeth One among you whom ye know not."† Many of the people were baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins with a true repentance; but others came in self-righteousness, boasting that Abraham was their father, and to them he said, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance."

But *One* came to John's baptism who was *not* sinful, and who needed no repentance. This could be true of one man only—our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet He came that He might "fulfil all righteousness"—all the requirements of the law—for He was made sin for us, and stood in our place. And when He was baptized, John saw the Spirit of God descending upon

\* The Greek form of the Hebrew word "Messiah," which was our Lord's official *title* as the Anointed Prophet, Priest, and King; "Jesus" was His personal *name*.

† St. John i. 19—26.

Him like a dove, and he heard a voice from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This visible descent of the Holy Ghost was to John the promised sign that Jesus was indeed "He that should come."

But our Lord was not only to receive baptism at the hands of John; He was to suffer being tempted, that He might succour them that are tempted.\* So the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness; and here He was alone forty days, "tempted of the devil." Satan told Him to give proof that He was the Son of God by commanding the stones to be made bread to satisfy His hunger, or to cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, for was it not written of the Son of God, "He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their



CHRIST'S BAPTISM.

hands shall they bear Thee up." Or would Christ worship the tempter for such dominion over the kingdoms of this world as he could give Him?

Thrice did the evil one tempt, and thrice did our Lord repel the temptation with the words, "It is written." Thus the Word of God, wielded by the Spirit of God, was Christ's weapon in this spiritual conflict.

At last the devil left Him, and angels ministered to Him.

While John was still baptizing on the banks of the Jordan Jesus passed by, and John again bore witness to Him, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

\* Heb. ii. 18.

Two of John's disciples heard their master's testimony to Jesus, and they followed Him. One of these was Andrew, and we may believe that the other was John. And Andrew sought out his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah—the Anointed," and he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus called him Cephas, in Greek Peter, which means a rock or stone, for Jesus knew that Simon would be firm as a rock in His cause, and that he would become one of the foundation stones of His Church. The next day Jesus took the road to Galilee with Simon Peter, Andrew, and John. And Jesus told Philip of Bethsaida to follow Him. Bethsaida was the home likewise of Andrew and Peter. Then Philip told his friend Nathanael how that they had found "Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write"; but Nathanael said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip answered, "Come and see," judge for yourself; and Nathanael, when he saw Jesus and found that He could read his heart, exclaimed, "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." So these four men, Andrew, John, Simon Peter, and Nathanael, who had all perhaps been disciples of the Baptist, became Christ's disciples. They had heard the holy words of Jesus, and very soon they witnessed His Divine power at a marriage feast at Cana in Galilee. Jesus and His disciples were guests, and Mary the mother of Jesus was there. And when the wine ran short, she said to Jesus, "They have no wine." Then we read how by-and-by Jesus turned water into wine—wine so good as to be commended by the governor of the feast, who knew not whence it was; and thus "He manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him" with a still stronger faith. This was our Lord's first miracle.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VII.

*Question.* Where and how would Jesus manifest Himself to His people?

*Q.* Who at this time was preaching to the Jews the baptism of repentance and cleansing?

*Q.* Why then did Jesus submit to the baptism of John?

*Q.* And what happened when Jesus was baptized?

*Q.* Did John rejoice when he saw this visible descent of the Holy Ghost?

*Q.* What happened to Jesus immediately after His baptism?

*Q.* What testimony did John the Baptist bear to Jesus when he saw Him again on the banks of the Jordan?

*Q.* Who heard this testimony and followed Jesus?

*Q.* Whom did Andrew bring to Jesus?

*Q.* What name did Jesus give to Simon?

*Q.* Did Jesus stay in Judæa?

*Q.* Whom did Philip seek out and bring to Jesus?

*Q.* Where and in what manner did Jesus' disciples soon witness His Divine power?

## LESSON VIII.

Jesus at the feast of the Passover—First cleansing of the temple—Jesus and the rulers—Nicodemus—Jesus and His disciples at Jordan—Jesus and the woman of Samaria—Jesus preaches to the Samaritans.

*Read St. John ii. 13—25, iii. 1—42.*

BUT Jesus tarried not long in Galilee. At Capernaum, a town on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret, Jesus and His disciples joined the company of pilgrims going up to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover. Once before we have seen Jesus at this feast. Then He was a boy of twelve, a learner sitting at the feet of the Jewish teachers, both hearing them and



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asking them questions. Now *He* taught and acted as one with authority, as one whose fan was in His hand, and who would thoroughly purge His floor. The temple, His Father's house. He would suffer no longer to be a house of merchandise ; and from the consecrated ground, the court of the Gentiles, He drove out the sheep and oxen and money changers, overturning the booths of these usurers, and so cleansing the temple of the Most High from the things that profaned it. No one resisted. His rebukes, " Take these things hence ; " "*make not*

*my Father's house a house of merchandise,*" met with no angry defiance. Thus the Lord came suddenly to His temple; and when the Jews, the priests and Pharisees, and scribes and Levites, heard what things were done, they dared not condemn the doer of them. Yet they asked of Jesus by what authority He had acted, and by what sign He would prove His right to such authority. Then He answered them by a saying they did not understand: "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They thought He spoke of the building made with hands, but He meant the temple of His body, which these Jews should destroy as a living body, but which He would raise up on the third day by His Almighty power. It was not, indeed, till after His resurrection that His disciples



JESUS AND NICODEMUS.

knew that He spake of that temple or tabernacle of flesh under which was hidden the ineffable glory of the eternal Son.

Many people believed on Jesus when they saw His miracles, but His holy words made no impression upon them; they repented not of their sins, and so were unfit to be His disciples.

Jesus had begun His ministry at Jerusalem, and there to His covenant people He had given full proof of His Messiahship, for He had come to them with the truth of God (His Divine words) and the power of God (His miracles), and thus He sought to win them to Himself in faith and penitence; but they set at naught His counsel, and would none of His reproof.

Yet there was one man amongst the rulers of the Jews—

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, who came to Jesus by night secretly to be instructed by Him. He dared not come openly, lest the rulers should call him the disciple of the despised Galilean; but he was in earnest, and desired to know the truth, and Jesus, overlooking his want of courage for the truth's sake, told him of those Divine mysteries—regeneration by water and the Spirit, the “lifting up” of the Son of man, redemption through His blood—that all who believe in Him should have eternal life.

After the feast of the Passover Jesus did not return immediately to Galilee, but He went with His disciples to the banks of the Jordan, and by their hands He baptized all who came to Him in penitence and faith: “*He* ever increasing, John ever decreasing; the crowds that had followed John now following Jesus, and the Baptist rejoicing that it should be so.” John’s work was done. The Messiah Himself had begun His ministry; and, like Moses viewing the Promised Land from the top of Pisgah, the land to which he had conducted the Israelites, but which he was forbidden to enter, John might only gaze from afar upon the kingdom of heaven and the Church of Christ, knowing that the least and the lowest in it was greater than he. But at last, when Jesus saw that the rulers and teachers of the Jewish people still refused His ministry, and hardened their hearts more and more to His reproofs, he returned to Galilee, and His way lay through Samaria.

We have seen that the Samaritans were the descendants of those foreigners who had been brought into the country by the Assyrians, and that the Jews and Samaritans hated one another very bitterly. But Jesus (though He came in the first place to His chosen people the Jews) was the Saviour of all men, and when He came to Sychar in Samaria (the town called Shechem in the Old Testament), and a woman of Samaria came to draw water from the well by the side of which He was sitting, He spoke kindly to her; and when He found that she desired instruction, He made Himself known to her as the Christ sent by God, and the Saviour of the world. He told this woman of “living water” which He would give to those who asked Him, and that all who would worship God acceptably must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Then the woman brought others to Jesus, and when they besought Him to tarry with them, He abode with them two days, and many of the Samaritans when they heard Him believed on Him.\*

In Galilee the people received Jesus gladly, because they had heard of His miracles at Jerusalem, and they wished themselves to see His mighty power, and to be healed of their

\* St. John iv. 7—42.

sicknesses. At Cana a nobleman begged Jesus to heal his son who was at the point of death, and he entreated Jesus, and exclaimed, "Sir, come down ere my child die." Jesus answered, "Go thy way ; thy son liveth." And he went his way because he believed the word that Jesus had spoken, and as he went his servants met him, and said, "Thy son liveth," and he believed, and his whole house.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VIII.

*Question.* To what feast at Jerusalem did Jesus now go with His disciples?

*Q.* What remarkable act did Jesus perform at this Passover?

*Q.* Did many people believe on Jesus when they saw His miracles?

*Q.* Did any one amongst the rulers of the Jews seek instruction from Jesus?

*Q.* Why did Nicodemus go to Jesus by night?

*Q.* Did Jesus then refuse to instruct Nicodemus?

*Q.* Of what Divine mysteries did Jesus speak to him?

*Q.* When Jesus returned to Galilee what people did He instruct on His way?

*Q.* What miracle did Jesus perform immediately on His return to Galilee?

### LESSON IX.

Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda—The Jews call Jesus a Sabbath-breaker and blasphemer—Jesus' defence—Jesus returns to Galilee.

*Read St. John v.*

AGAIN there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem to testify to His people by His words and works that He was the Saviour that should come.

Around the Pool of Bethesda (House of Mercy), a famed medicinal spring near one of the gates of the city, there lay one Sabbath morning a number of sick and afflicted people, waiting for the moment when the seething and bubbling of the waters showed that its healing properties were at their height, and he who first stepped into them would get the most benefit from them. One poor sufferer had waited long beside the pool, always hoping, but never able, by reason of his infirmity, to take his turn ; and so, after long years of patient waiting, he seemed as far as ever from the attainment of his hopes. But when he heard the strange command, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk," and felt in his limbs the sudden strength that the word of Omnipotence had given him, he, who for thirty-eight years had been a miserable cripple, arose, took up his pallet, and walked. But the rulers and teachers of the Jews, the scribes and lawyers and Pharisees (the men who taught religion and professed to practice it), reproved him, saying,



"It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." Thus these men perverted the commands of God, which were meant for man's good, into a burden and bondage, which could only injure him. How did the man reply to them? He said, "He that made me whole *He* said to me, Take up thy bed and walk." Then they asked him what man gave him this command, "Take up thy bed and walk." They took no thought of the miracle nor of the good done to the man on the Sabbath day, but only how they might persecute the doer of it, "because He had done these things on the Sabbath day." What did the Lord of the Sabbath say to them? What was His defence? "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. The living God, whose energy upholds from day to day, from hour to hour, the work of His creation, resteth not; nor yet can I, His Son. No Sabbath rest for Me until the work which He hath given Me be done! Not Mine, but His the work; not Me, but Him are ye accusing! To Him, the Holy One, My Father, I appeal." But the Jews sought the more to kill Him; and now they accused Him of being not only a Sabbath-breaker, but a *blasphemer*, "because He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." Yet our Lord did not bear witness of Himself. There were three witnesses that testified of Him—John the Baptist, Moses, and the God whom they professed to honour. The testimony of John they had rejected; Moses, whose disciples they claimed to be, had told them to hear the prophet like unto himself, whom God should raise up, but they would not listen to his teaching. Nor would they be convinced by His miracles, by which God the Father testified to the Son whom He had sent. And there was yet another witness—the Scriptures, which they perverted and misunderstood. Even now these impious men sought to kill Him, but their time had not yet come, and His work on earth was not yet accomplished; so He returned once more to Galilee, and to Galilee the Jews sent spies to watch Him that they might accuse Him.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON IX.

*Question.* Did Jesus again testify to the people of Jerusalem by His words and works that He was the Messiah?

*Q.* Did the rulers and teachers of the people give thanks to God for this wonderful miracle?

*Q.* What did they call Him?

*Q.* What did Jesus say to them?

*Q.* How did God the Father testify that Jesus was the Son of God?

*Q.* And did not Jesus say that there was yet another witness?

*Q.* Did Jesus continue His ministry in Jerusalem?

*Q.* Did the hatred of these impious men follow Him to Galilee?

## LESSON X.

Ministry of Jesus in Galilee—Jesus at Nazareth—Jesus makes Capernaum His home—Jesus on the lake of Gennesaret—The miraculous draught of fishes—Its spiritual meaning—Miracles and teaching of Jesus at Capernaum.

*Read St. Matt. iv. 13—22; St. Mark i. 16—34; St. Luke iv. 14—41;  
St. John iv. 43—54.*

GOD had declared long ago by the prophet Isaiah that the Messiah whom He would send should be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and in the last Lesson we have seen the complete rejection of Jesus by the religious rulers and teachers of the people, and their bitter hostility towards Him. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." The Jewish nation had become corrupt and polluted, and needed purification. And so John the Baptist came preaching repentance; but though many people were baptized of him in Jordan confessing their sins, the Jews as a nation repented not, and their spiritual leaders would not acknowledge Him; and their bitter persecution made Jerusalem unsafe for Jesus Himself; so He left it, and once more the Light of the world shone upon the darkness of Galilee, where Jesus taught the people, sometimes in parables and dark sayings, and sometimes in words plain and easy to be understood, and He healed all manner of sickness and all manner of disease amongst them, while great multitudes followed Him from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan. At Nazareth—His old home on the hill-side—He stood up in the synagogue one Sabbath to read the second lesson taken from the prophets, and He read that in the prophet Isaiah of the anointing of the Messiah with the Holy Ghost.\* "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."† Then closing the book, He told them that the acceptable year of the Lord had even then begun, and that He Himself was the Messiah, the Anointed One of whom the prophet spoke. Earnestly the people in the synagogue gazed upon Him, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth. But they believed Him not, for they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" And

\* Isa. lxi. 1, 2.

† Isa. xi. 1, 2.

when our Lord told them of the greater faith of the Gentiles, they would hear Him no longer, and not only expelled Him from the synagogue and from the town, but would have cast Him headlong down from the hill on the side of which their town was built; but He, passing through the midst of them, went His way (escaped out of their hands), and leaving Nazareth, He took up His abode in Capernaum, and it became "His own city." Here, in the most populous part of Palestine, great multitudes followed Jesus, and so pressed upon Him that, coming to the lake of Gennesaret, He got into a boat belonging to His disciple Simon, and pushing off a little way, He was the Light of the world, and taught the people as they stood along the shore. Then, when the Lord had done speaking to the people, He told Simon to run the boat out into deep water and let down his fishing-nets. Simon and his companions had been toiling all night, but had taken nothing; but, nevertheless, at his Lord's command "he would let down the net," and they enclosed so great a multitude of fishes that the net was on the point of breaking. The boats (Simon's boat and his partner's) were likewise in danger, for they were so overloaded with the multitude of fishes that they began to sink. Then Simon, filled with awe at the presence of the Holy One, whose greatness, power, and holiness made him feel his own unworthiness, "fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." But Jesus said, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Peter was ordained to bring many souls out of the troubled waters of the world into the kingdom of Christ upon earth—His Church. So we see that our Lord's miracles had a spiritual and typical meaning. When Simon and his brother Andrew had brought the boats to shore, they and their partners, James and John the sons of Zebedee, forsook all and followed Jesus.

At Capernaum they were astonished at Christ's teaching, for His word was with power; and He healed all the sick and afflicted people brought to Him.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON X.

*Question.* What prophecies did the rulers of the Jews unconsciously fulfil by their treatment of Jesus?

*Q.* Were the Jewish people very corrupt at this time?

*Q.* Did the Jewish people repent at the preaching of John?

*Q.* Did Jesus go on with His ministry on His return to Galilee?

*Q.* Did Jesus visit His old home at Nazareth, and how did the people of Nazareth behave when our Lord spoke of the greater faith of the Gentiles?

*Q.* On leaving Nazareth where did Jesus take up His abode?

*Q.* How did He manifest Himself to His disciples at this time, and to the people of Capernaum?

## LESSON XI.

The Sermon on the Mount—Teaching by parables—Parable of the sower  
—Parable of the seed growing secretly.

*Read St. Matt. v.—vii., xiii. 1—52; St. Mark iv. 1—20; St. Luke vi.  
20—49, viii. and xiii.*

GREAT and wonderful as were the works and miracles of Jesus, and greatly as they benefited a multitude of people, His words have for us a still higher interest and significance. His visible miracles have ceased, for He is now behind the veil and hidden from us, so that we no longer hear His voice calling the dead to life, nor see His hand stretched out to give the healing touch; but His words are still as full of meaning and instruction as they were on the day on which He uttered them.

Now one of our Lord's most memorable discourses is that known to us as His Sermon on the Mount. After a night spent in prayer He ordained the twelve apostles, and then, sitting on the side of a lofty hill near the lake of Genesareth, He laid down the laws of His new spiritual kingdom—His Church to be built shortly upon apostles and prophets, He Himself being the chief Corner Stone; just below Him there was a multitude of people from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan. The law of Christ's kingdom is the law of love—a love to be extended not only to friends, but to enemies; and the people of His kingdom are to be humble, meek, merciful, peace-makers, pure in heart, mourning for sin, and thirsting after righteousness. Such, said Christ, are blessed; they will be the light of the world, and their light is so to shine before men that they may see their good works and glorify their Father which is in heaven. Their righteousness is to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, and they are to be perfect, even as their Father is perfect. These are the laws of Christ's kingdom, and only such as obey them can enter it; only those who love Christ can be true members of Christ's Church, for He said—

“If a man love Me he will keep My words.”

“He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings.”

“Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descende

and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

The people were astonished at Christ's doctrine, so different was it from all they had heard before from their own teachers.

Sometimes Jesus taught the people by parables. A parable is a story with a hidden meaning, and in this hidden spiritual meaning the truths that parable is intended to teach us lie concealed. So those only will derive any good from it who possess some spiritual understanding, and who really desire to be instructed in spiritual things. Thus parables are intended to veil or hide the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven from profane or careless hearers; and this was the reason why our Lord so often spoke to the people in parables; for, in answer to the disciple's question, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He said, Because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath." "It was a judgment—a punishment—a taking away from those who had not because they *would not* have." Jesus never revealed high spiritual truths to those who hardened their hearts against them, for He said in another place, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine."

The evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, all tell us how once Jesus, as He sat in a boat on the lake of Gennesaret, taught the great multitudes that followed Him and were standing before Him on the shore of the lake; and we know how often to illustrate and explain spiritual things He referred to familiar scenes and objects—sunrise and sunset, clouds and sunshine, lightning and storm, birds, trees, flowers, and fields, the seed, the sower, and the ripening grain. As our Lord sat in the boat He saw on the shore close by corn-fields and ground of different kinds and qualities—hard ground, rocky ground, thorny ground, shallow ground, and good ground. Then turning to the people, He said:—

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow: and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprang up because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold."

In this parable the ground of different kinds represents different states of the heart of man—the hard heart, the shallow heart, the worldly heart, and the heart prepared by God's grace, where the seed "sprang up and increased,"\* and brought forth thirty, sixty, and one hundred-fold.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XI.

*Question.* Which of our Lord's sermons or discourses at this time was the most memorable?

*Q.* Why is this sermon of especial interest?

*Q.* What is especially the law of Christ's kingdom, and how far is its love to extend?

*Q.* How did Jesus sometimes teach people?

*Q.* What is a parable? and why did our Lord use parables?

*Q.* What is the meaning of the parable of the sower?

### LESSON XII.

The storm on the lake—The Gadarene demoniac—The woman who touched Christ's garment—Jesus sends forth His disciples—Death of John the Baptist—Jesus feeds the five thousand.

*Read St. Matt.* viii. 18—27, ix. 18—26, x. 1—42, xiv. 13—21; *St. Mark* iv. 35—41, v. 21—43, vi. 7—44; *St. Luke* viii. 22—25, viii. 40—56, ix. 1—5; *St. John* vi. 1—14.

WHEN weary with perpetual work in the service of men as the Great Physician—the Healer of all maladies both of the soul and body—Jesus sometimes crossed to the other side of the lake of Gennesaret with His disciples that they might escape for a little while to the opposite shore from the multitudes that followed them. There He found needful rest and quiet, and time to instruct His disciples in the great and difficult lessons they had yet to learn.

On one of these occasions so sudden and violent a storm swept over the lake that the boat began to fill and they were in danger of being swallowed up by the raging waters.

But Jesus was asleep on a pillow in the hinder part of the ship. Then they woke Him in haste and said, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" but He reproved them, saying, "Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?" and He rebuked the winds and the waves with the words, "Peace, be still," and immediately there was so great a calm that the disciples feared exceedingly and exclaimed, "What manner of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" Jesus had already shown Himself master of the Powers of Darkness, and now on the eastern side of the lake He again made it evident by casting

\* St. Mark alone has this expression (see iv. 8).

ing the evil spirits out of the Gadarene demoniac who had his dwelling amongst the tombs.

Jesus still did many miracles. He healed the woman who touched the fringe of His garment, raised to life the little daughter of Jairus, and went about through all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, and healing every sickness and every disease amongst the people. Besides this He sent forth His disciples, two and two, to preach the kingdom of heaven, and He gave them power to heal the sick and to cast out evil spirits. So the apostles preached repentance, and in Christ's name did many wonderful works.

It was about this time that Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been cruelly murdered by Herod Antipas, Tetrarch, or ruler



TIBERIAS AND THE LAKE OF GENNESARET.

of Galilee and Perea, a son of that Herod who was King of the Jews when Jesus was born, and who slaughtered the little children of Bethlehem. Herod Antipas was just what the son of so bad a man might be expected to be. He cared only to please himself and to gratify his own lusts and passions. He put away his own wife and married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; but John the Baptist told him that it was not lawful for him to have her to wife, and so Herod hated John, and shut him up in prison. Some time afterwards Herodias entrapped Herod into making a rash promise. Her daughter danced before him and pleased him so much that he vowed he

would give her whatever she asked for ; and then to fulfil that promise and to comply with her petition he ordered John the Baptist to be beheaded. His head was given to this young girl, and she gave it to her mother, who had told her to ask for it.

Jesus was grieved to hear this, and, leaving the crowded and busy Capernaum, He crossed with His disciples to the other side of the lake of Gennesaret (called also the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberias) and went into "a desert place apart."

But the people soon followed by walking round the north side of the lake. And when Jesus saw them He had pity on them as sheep having no shepherd. They were far from home, men, women, and children, and they had no food. He said to His disciples, who asked Him to tell them to return home, "They will faint by the way, for many of them came from far." So He fed them, and they did all eat and were filled, and yet the twelve disciples filled each one his provision basket\* with the broken pieces that were scattered about when the meal was done and remained over and above from the five loaves and two small fishes with which Jesus had fed 5,000 men besides women and children.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XII.

*Question.* What happened on one occasion as Jesus and His disciples were crossing the lake of Gennesaret in a boat ?

*Q.* Were the disciples astonished that even the wind and the sea obeyed him ?

*Q.* Jesus, we have seen, did many miracles. Did He give His disciples power to do any ?

*Q.* What event at this time grieved our Lord ?

*Q.* What did Jesus do when He heard of this event ?

*Q.* What did He say to His disciples when they asked Him to send the people away, and what did He do for the people ?

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#### LESSON XIII.

The disciples on the lake—The storm—Jesus walks on the water : "It is I, be not afraid"—Simon Peter goes to meet Jesus—Discourse on the Bread of Life.

*Read St. Matt.* xiv. 22—36 ; *St. Mark* vi. 45—56 ; *St. John* vi. 15—21, vi. 22—65.

JESUS desired sometimes to be alone with His Heavenly Father (He alone of all mankind, we must remember, had no earthly Father), and then He would pass long hours in prayer to Him. And it was for this purpose that, when He had fed the multitude, He bade His disciples return to Capernaum and afterwards dismissed the people. Then He went up into the

\* The *cophinus*, or wicker-basket used by the Jews to carry provisions to save the risk of defilement with unclean food.



hill country for prayer and meditation ; but by-and-by a sudden storm drove down upon the lake and overtook the disciples, who had got, perhaps, half-way across. They were again in danger of sinking, and with all their rowing they could make no way. And they were only the more frightened when they saw a figure walking towards them on the tempestuous sea. "It is a spirit," they said, and cried out with fear ; but they heard a voice saying to them, "It is I, be not afraid." Then they knew it was the Lord, and Peter went to meet Him, but his faith failed, and beginning to sink he cried out to Jesus to save him.

This a picture of what often happens to the followers of Christ in these days. Just as the waters raged around the boat on the Galilean Sea and the disciples were sore afraid, but all the while Jesus was near and came to save them,

"So now upon the sea of life  
The storms rage fierce and strong,  
When we by wild and earnest strife  
Are helpless borne along.

"Oh! then, upon the battling tide,  
When the boat begins to fill,  
The Saviour stands the barque beside,  
And bids the storm be still."

When the people who had been fed on the eastern side of the lake saw the disciples set out on their return while Jesus stayed behind, they likewise lingered, waiting, perhaps, for another miraculous meal, or in hopes that the Lord would openly display His kingly authority—take to Himself His power and reign over His people, for they saw in Him the promised Messiah. They would gladly have hailed Him King, although their hopes and expectations were all of this world and its greatness. But when the morning came and Jesus was nowhere to be seen, they returned to Capernaum in some boats that had arrived from Tiberias, and when they found Him teaching in the synagogue they were astonished and said, "Rabbi, how comest Thou hither?" But our Lord did not satisfy their curiosity ; and knowing that they sought Him not from any high or spiritual motives but only that they might eat and be filled, or to obtain from Him some worldly favours or advantages and not as a teacher sent by God—He said to them, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which remaineth to eternal life, which the Son of man shall give you ; for Him the Father, even God, hath sealed" ; and they asked, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" His answer was : "Believe on Me whom He hath sent : *this* is the work of God." But what *sign* would He give them? Moses gave them the sign of bread from heaven

—manna ; the bread that He gave them yesterday was only common bread—barley loaves—and not angels' food.

Jesus answered : " My Father, God, gave you manna and not loaves, neither was manna the true bread from heaven ; but My Father is now giving you the true bread from heaven, even the bread that came down from heaven and is giving life to the world." Then they said, " Lord, evermore give us this bread," and He replied, " I am the Bread of Life " !

Then they murmured. " How could He have come down from heaven ? How could *He* be the bread from heaven ? How could this man give them His flesh to eat ? "

To such murmurs, to inquiries made in such a spirit Jesus never vouchsafed any explanation. He only repeated the hard saying, "*I am* the Bread of Life." And He not only repeated it, but made it more difficult. "*My flesh* is this bread." " Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

At this doctrine, so mysterious, so incomprehensible, the disciples likewise murmured. " This is a hard saying," they exclaimed, " who can hear it ? " But to them its meaning would be made plain. And their Lord guided them to the right understanding of it. What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before ?—ascend to heaven. Then they would believe that He came down from heaven—that He was possessed of a Divine Nature, and that it was of His *glorified spiritual* body He had spoken. Not of His flesh as they then saw it—that could profit them nothing. So in the Holy Communion Christians spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood, and derive all their spiritual life and strength from Him.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XIII.

*Question.* What did Jesus do when He had fed the five thousand ?

*Q.* What happened to the disciples as they were re-crossing the lake to Capernaum ?

*Q.* Did Jesus join them ? and were they comforted when they saw Him ?

*Q.* What is all this a picture of ?

*Q.* What did the people do whom Jesus had fed on the eastern side of the lake when they saw the disciples set out on their return while Jesus remained behind ?

*Q.* But when the morning came, and Jesus was nowhere to be seen, did they return to Capernaum ?

*Q.* What did Jesus say to them ?

*Q.* Did they believe what He told them ?

*Q.* Did Jesus explain His meaning to them ?

*Q.* Did Jesus guide His disciples to a right understanding of the mystery ?

*Q.* In the Holy Communion do the faithful "*verily and indeed*" partake of Christ's blessed body and blood ?

## LESSON XIV.

Jesus on the coasts of Tyre and Sidon—Jesus and the Syrophenician woman—Jesus in Decapolis—Jesus reasoning with scribes and Pharisees—Peter's great confession—Jesus perfect God and perfect man.

*Read St. Matt. xv., xvi.; St. Mark vii., viii., and ix.; St. Luke ix. 18—27; St. John vi. 66—71.*

To escape, perhaps, the malignant hatred of the scribes and Pharisees who had followed Him from Jerusalem that they might accuse Him again of Sabbath-breaking or blasphemy, or of some offence that might enable them to bring about His death, Jesus departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, a part of Syria that lay outside the Holy Land, and He probably visited Sidon, the most famous seaport of the world in those times. Yet even here, fifty miles north from Capernaum, the people had heard of Jesus and how He cured all diseases and had authority over evil spirits and cast them out, for a Gentile woman, a Syrophenician woman, a woman of the sea-coast of Syria, came to Him and besought Him to heal her daughter, who was grievously vexed with a devil; but He answered her not a word. Yet with a belief in Christ's power and in His willingness to help her that no repulse could shake, and a persistent prayer that would take no denial, she still pleaded, "Lord, help me"; till at last He exclaimed, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." So prayer prevailed, and it is still a *power* that brings down blessings in proportion to our faith. Christ's mission was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; but the holy importunity of the Canaanitish woman broke down all barriers and won from our Lord not only the special blessing she sought for her child, but the precious testimony that she not only possessed true faith, and that it was "great."

In other places our Lord "could do no miracle because of the unbelief" of those amongst whom He ministered, so, while true faith pleaded God's promises and insured their fulfilment, the absence of it was a positive hindrance to the success of Christ's work.

Through the half-heathen population of Decapolis our Lord returned to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, where He healed every disease and every infirmity amongst the people, so that they glorified the God of Israel and said, "He doeth all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

Crossing once more to the western side of the Sea of Galilee

our Lord reasoned with the scribes and Pharisees, whose mutual hatred of Him had banded them together in unwonted friendship. To entrap Him into some grave offence against their interpretation of the law, and to accuse Him of Sabbath-breaking and blasphemy was still their aim. They demanded of Him a sign in the heavens, a miracle of their own choosing; but He denounced them as an evil and adulterous generation, and they turned a deaf ear to the wisdom of God revealed to them by Jesus Christ, and were unmoved by His most solemn warnings and exhortations. He "left them and departed," crossing again to the other side of the lake to Bethsaida Julias.

And as Jesus and His disciples walked up the valley of the Jordan to Cæsarea Philippi, a town lying at the foot of Mount Hermon, He put to them the question "Whom do men say



SIDON.

that I the Son of man am?" and when they had answered Him, another question followed of still greater import, "But whom say ye that I am?" Ye, My disciples, to whom I have revealed Myself, ye whom I have instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of God, do ye indeed know and understand who I your Master am? Then Simon Peter, speaking in the name of all, answered boldly, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*. A good confession, a certain knowledge of the true nature of Christ which our Lord said was revealed to Peter by God the Father and not by man. And He blessed Peter and said, "Thou art Peter" (a rock or stone), and that upon this rock—the confession that Jesus was both God and Christ—He would build His Church. And the disciple who had just made this confession was well called Peter, a rock or stone,

for he was to be a firm defender of the truth, and one of the foundation stones on which the Church would be built, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.

Thus the apostles had learnt the great truth that Christ was not only the Messiah of Israel, but the Son of the Living God. Not the Son of God in the way that every man is a son of God, but that He was the Only-begotten Son of God, Very God of Very God, of one Substance with the Father. Perfect God as well as perfect man. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XIV.

*Question.* Did Jesus again leave Capernaum about this time, and where did He go?

*Q.* Did our Lord grant the request of the Syrophenician woman?

*Q.* What answer did Jesus at last give her?

*Q.* What does this example of the Canaanitish woman teach us?

*Q.* Do we find that in some instances want of faith was a hindrance to the success of Christ's work?

*Q.* Amongst what people did Jesus do many miracles of healing?

*Q.* What did the scribes and Pharisees demand of Him?

*Q.* What did Jesus say to His disciples as He walked with them towards the town of Cæsarea Philippi?

*Q.* What answer did the disciples make?

*Q.* What answer did Jesus make to this great confession of His Godhead and Messiahship?

#### LESSON XV.

The more difficult lesson—Peter's "Be it far from Thee, Lord"—Following Christ—Partakers of Christ's sufferings—On the Mount of Transfiguration.

*Read St. Matt. xxii. 1—13; St. Mark ix. 2—13; St. Luke ix. 28—36.*

JESUS CHRIST was the Messiah of prophecy, the Prophet like unto Moses, the Founder of a Divine Kingdom, the Redeemer of the world; and besides fulfilling all these several aspects of His character, He came to be believed in as God.

And this great central truth was now received and acknowledged by the disciples; but they had yet to learn the much harder lesson that their Divine Master, the Messiah of Israel and the Son of the Living God, was to suffer and die the terrible and ignominious death of the cross,\* and to rise again the third day. It was for this great trial of their faith, this great test of their love, and this terrible disappointment of all their hopes and expectations, that Jesus now wished to prepare the minds of His disciples.

\* St. Matt. xvi. 21.

But when He told them of His coming cross and passion, and how He must suffer many things of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day, Peter began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord ; this shall not be unto Thee." Jesus saw in this answer of the impetuous disciple only a repetition of the lure of the wicked one that he should seize at once His crown and His kingdom, and turn away from the scoffs and insults, the ignominy and the agony, which in the counsels of God He must previously encounter as that Redeemer who should offer up the one great and sufficient sacrifice for sin, the sacrifice of Himself. So He addressed Peter as if he were indeed the very mouthpiece of Satan, for He said to him, "Get thee behind Me, Satan, for thou art an offence unto Me."

And Jesus said besides, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it" (shall lose eternal life) ; "and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." Yes, the disciples themselves must be sharers in Christ's suffering. Perhaps since Peter's confession they had thought only of the glories of Christ's kingdom, and who amongst them should be greatest in that kingdom. But now they are to understand the exceeding depths to which their Lord will stoop, and that whosoever will follow Him must likewise take up His cross, aye, and not to count his life dear, so that he might follow his Lord. And many a Christian in the early days of the Church of Jesus Christ did esteem the blood-red crown of martyrdom of greater value than any crown that this world could offer them.

But to give His disciples a foretaste of His own glory, and of the glory that awaited those who follow Him and love not their lives unto the death, Jesus took Peter and James and John up a high mountain, and was transfigured before them. His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could whiten them. The glory of the eternal Godhead streamed through Christ's human body, and His disciples beheld His glory. Moses and Elijah likewise appeared in glory, and spake with Him of His decease that He should accomplish at Jerusalem, "and so bore witness, the one for the Law and the other for the Prophets, that it was a suffering Messiah to whom both Law and Prophets had ever pointed." And before they departed, the bright cloud, the sign of Jehovah's presence, overshadowed them, and out of the cloud there came a voice which said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him."

Thus to the three disciples did Jesus plainly show forth His Godhead. The Mount of Transfiguration was the highest point, the summit-level and central standpoint of His life on earth. Henceforth His miracles were few, and His teaching was addressed rather to His disciples than to others. He had revealed His Godhead; He now prepared His disciples for His coming Passion; for the terrible events of Holy Week.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XV.

*Question.* What other and still harder lesson did Jesus now seek to teach His disciples?

*Q.* When He first spoke to them of His cross and passion what did Peter say?

*Q.* What did Jesus see in this answer of Peter?

*Q.* What other hard doctrine did Jesus teach His disciples?

*Q.* How, soon after this, did Jesus give some of His disciples a glimpse of His glory—the glory that should follow the cross and shame?

*Q.* And who did the apostles behold talking with Him of His approaching death

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#### LESSON XVI.

Jesus at the feast of Tabernacles—"The very Christ"—The Light of the world—Jesus declares His pre-existence—Taking up stones to stone Him—Jesus gives sight to a man born blind—Hatred of the scribes and Pharisees—Jesus at the feast of Dedication—One with the Father—Indignation of the people—Jesus retires to Bethany.

*Read St. John vii. 1—59, ix. 1—41, x.*

AGAIN at the feast of Tabernacles Jesus showed Himself publicly at Jerusalem, although the scribes and Pharisees had accused Him of Sabbath-breaking and blasphemy, and on these charges they sought to put Him to death. And this was no secret, for the people expressed their surprise when they saw Him, and said, "Is not this He whom they seek to kill? but lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?"\* But Jerusalem was full of Galileans, and the rulers were afraid to seize their countryman. "Not on a feast day," they said, "lest there be an uproar amongst the people." And when they did attempt to take Him prisoner, the officers sent to bring Him before the Sanhedrim were overawed, and returned, saying, "Never man spake like this man,"† and they dared not seize Him. Then on the last day of the feast, when it was the custom to bring water from Siloam to pour on the high altar, our Lord in allusion to this water (using it as a type of the Holy Spirit which would be poured out upon His Church after His resurrection), said, "He that believeth on

\* St. John vii. 25, 26.

† St. John vii. 46.

Me, as the Scripture saith, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this," we are told, "He spake of the Spirit, which they who believe on Him should receive." \*

In the courts of the temple Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the "Light of the world," and affirmed His union with the Father: "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me." "If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also, and that He was the Messiah." "When ye have lifted Me up" (crucified Me), "then shall ye know that I am He." Many believed on Him as He spoke these words. Others reviled Him, saying, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil;" and when, in answer to these questions, our Lord spoke of His



BETHANY.

pre-existence, "Before Abraham was, I am," they took up stones to stone Him.

The miracle of giving sight to the man who was born blind was significant of the enlightenment of the soul by the Spirit of God, but the priests and scribes and Pharisees hated the light, and they examined the man to whom Jesus had given sight, hoping by his testimony to accuse Him whom they pursued with so malignant and unrelenting a hatred. But he would not be a tool in their hands. They doubted whether he were born blind, and pretended to have discovered the imposture; but his parents testified, saying, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind"; and when they called

\* St. John vii. 38.



Jesus a sinner, the man put them to shame, declaring, "If this man were a sinner, He could do nothing," and they cast him out of the synagogue. Then Jesus denounced these men, who professed to be the spiritual guides of the nation. They were false shepherds, while He was the true Shepherd who giveth His life for the sheep; but they said, "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him?" But those who believed on Him asked, "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? and moreover, His words are not the words of him who hath a devil."

Again, in Jerusalem, at the Feast of Dedication, in the beautiful cloister of the temple called Solomon's Porch, our Lord revealed Himself more plainly than ever as *One with the Father*, and then they took up stones to stone Him, because (they said) He being a man, "made Himself God."

So He retired to Bethabara, or Bethany, beyond Jordan, and near to Jericho, there to wait the coming Passover, when He, the true Paschal Lamb, would be offered. Then He would go once more, and for the last time, to His own royal city; not, however, to reign in it as King, but to fulfil His own prophecy to "suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and to be killed, and be raised again the third day."

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XVI.

*Question.* At what feast did Jesus again publicly show Himself at Jerusalem?

*Q.* What did the people say when they saw Jesus at the feast?

*Q.* Why did not our Lord's enemies seize Him?

*Q.* But when they did attempt it, and sent officers to take Him, what excuse did they return with to those who had sent them for not taking Him?

*Q.* Can you repeat some of our Lord's sayings to the people at this time?

*Q.* And in the courts of the temple what did Jesus proclaim Himself to be?

*Q.* What effect had these sayings upon the people?

*Q.* When our Lord spoke of His pre-existence, saying, "Before Abraham was, I am," what did the Jews do?

*Q.* Of what was Christ's miracle of giving sight to the man born blind significant?

*Q.* Did the priests and scribes and Pharisees extol this miracle?

*Q.* What did Jesus declare more plainly than ever at the Feast of Dedication?

*Q.* To what place did Jesus then retire, and for how long?

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#### LESSON XVII.

Jesus raises Lazarus—The Sanhedrim resolve that He shall die—Jesus retires to Ephraim—Last journey to Jerusalem—Again tells His disciples of His coming cross and passion—The great request.

*Read St. John xi. 1—57.*

IT was at Bethany beyond Jordan that Jesus received the hurried message from the Bethany near to Jerusalem that he

whom He loved was sick. This was Lazarus, the one intimate and personal friend of the Lord who was not an apostle. Jesus sent the comforting message to Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, that this sickness was not unto death, (meaning, perhaps, that the death of the body is no interruption to life in Christ,\*) but for the glory of God. Lazarus died the very day that the messenger told Jesus of his sickness; yet Jesus tarried two days longer in the place where he was, and His disciples would have persuaded Him from venturing again within reach of the Jews of Jerusalem, who had so lately attempted to stone Him. But no harm could come to Him while the appointed time of His ministry lasted, and the day of triumph permitted to His enemies was still in the future. Two more days were occupied in the journey, and it was the fourth day from the day of Lazarus' death when Jesus drew nigh to Bethany. First Martha and Mary went forth to meet Him, and greeted Him with words in which sorrow and an acknowledgment of Christ's love mingled with gentle reproach: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus told Martha that her brother should rise again, and that He (Jesus) was the Resurrection and the Life; but when He saw the grief of the weeping sisters and of their friends, Jesus Himself wept, and said, "Where have ye laid him?" Then while all stood in hushed expectation around the tomb, He gave thanks to His Father in heaven that He had heard His Son's prayer, and spoke the thrilling words, "Lazarus, come forth"; and he who was dead, now quickened by the words of the Lord of Life, came forth a living man.

This was our Lord's crowning miracle, and many of His enemies, the Jews, who saw it believed on Him; but the others, who hardened their hearts against both the words and works of Jesus, were only the more anxious to destroy Him. The members of the Sanhedrim, the great ecclesiastical Council of the Jews, assembled hastily to consider what should be done. Might not the Galileans soon make Jesus King, and so bring on a ruinous conflict with the all-powerful Romans, who then would enslave, if not destroy, the Jewish people? Caiaphas the high priest, little dreaming that he was uttering a prophecy put into his mouth by the Spirit of God,† declared it was "expedient that one man should die for the people?" And so it was determined. The Galilean prophet must be sacrificed for the good of the nation, and the decree was made that if any man knew when and where He might be found, the Council was to be made acquainted with it. But the appointed time for the Great Sacrifice was the approaching Passover, and it must

\* St. John xi. 25.

† St. John xi. 51.

not be hastened by even a few short weeks. So Jesus, knowing that the secret decree of the Sanhedrim had condemned Him to death, that a price was put upon His head, retired to the little town of Ephraim, somewhere on the borders of the desert, and near to Jericho. Here, for a short time, He lay hid ; but when the Passover pilgrims began to pour down the Jordan valley He joined the caravan or company of Galileans, and began His last sad and solemn journey to the city which had rejected Him, but for which He felt such infinite compassion. Jesus led the way, "in all the majesty of sorrow," and the disciples followed with fear and foreboding, for their Divine Master seemed absorbed with meditations they dared not disturb, and which gave to His outward demeanour a grandeur and a pathos which they beheld with terror and amazement. "But at last" (says a graphic writer) "He paused and beckoned them to Him, and then once more, for the third time, with fuller, clearer, more startling, more terrible particulars than ever before, He told them that He should be betrayed to the priests and scribes ; by them condemned ; by them handed over to the Gentiles ; by the Gentiles mocked, scourged, and—He now for the first time revealed to them, without any ambiguity, the crowning horror—*crucified*; and that on the third day He should rise again. But their minds were full of Messianic hopes ; they were so pre-occupied with the conviction that now the kingdom of God was to come in all its splendour, that the prophecy passed by them like idle wind ; they could not and would not understand." Their thoughts were occupied only with the grandeur and earthly glories of the Messianic kingdom, and with a selfish and jealous ambition to be each one the greatest in it. "Grant," said the mother of James and John, "that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left in Thy kingdom." By-and-by they would reckon it as gain to be partakers of the sufferings of Christ, but now they shrank from all idea of such a baptism.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XVII.

*Question.* From whom did Jesus while at Bethabara receive the hurried message, "He whom Thou lovest is sick" ?

*Q.* Who was Lazarus ?

*Q.* What comforting message did Jesus send to Martha and Mary ?

*Q.* But as Lazarus died the very day that Jesus received the message, what could He mean by these words ?

*Q.* When Jesus reached Bethany on the fourth day after Lazarus' death, what happened ?

*Q.* What effect did this crowning miracle—the raising of Lazarus—have on the Jews ?

*Q.* What great ecclesiastical council of the Jews assembled in consequence, and what did they decide upon ?

*Q.* Was there anything remarkable in the words of Caiaphas the High Priest?

*Q.* What did Jesus do when He heard that the Sanhedrim had decided upon His death?

*Q.* Why was our Lord's last journey to Jerusalem so sad and solemn?

## LESSON XVIII.

Jesus at Bethany—The costly offering—Palm Sunday—Second cleansing of the temple—Jesus denounces the scribes and Pharisees—Their character and teaching—Christ's lament over Jerusalem.

*Read St. Matt.* xxvi. 6—13; *St. Mark* xiv. 3—9; *St. John* xii. 1—50.

THE question now eagerly debated by the people during the days of preparation for the Passover was, Will He come to the feast? Will He dare to show Himself openly, now that the rulers have condemned Him to death, and are only waiting an opportunity of seizing Him? Yes, all reason for concealment was at an end. Once again Jesus would call and invite His people to believe in Him as their Messiah, to make trial of His love, and upon the Pharisees He would pronounce the terrible woes that their own hatred and persecution of the Holy One drew down upon them.

So on Friday evening, six days before the Passover (Nisan 8, March 31, 30 A.D.), our Lord arrived at Bethany, and took up His abode, it is likely, with Lazarus and his sisters; and it was the next day, we must believe—Saturday, the Sabbath—that “they made Him a supper,” and Mary poured her offering of costly perfume upon His head and feet, thus anointing Him, as Jesus said, “against the day of His burying.” At the same time Judas became the type of all those who begrudge expenditure on Christ, on His Church, and on His worship, under pretence of caring for the poor; and that night the apostate apostle betrayed his Lord, covenanting with them for thirty pieces of silver, a sum worth about £3 16s. of our money.

And now, O people of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass, amidst the acclamations and rejoicings of the multitude. He gazes earnestly upon the beautiful city, and weeps over it, exclaiming, “O that *thou hadst known*”—thou too as well as My disciples—“*at least in this thy day*”—now, after so many days of grace and salvation in which thou mightest have been accepted; now in this the eleventh hour, this last space of trial and repentance—“*the things which belong unto thy peace.*” Christ wept, for He saw in prophetic vision the doom that Jerusalem was bringing down upon herself. The time of her visitation would soon be

over, and the time of vengeance would most surely follow. He saw the armies of Titus encamped before it, and compassing it round with mound and wall on every side. He saw the city in ruins and the temple in ashes, while the Romans crucified the miserable inhabitants by thousands and sold them into slavery by tens of thousands. And within fifty years all this came to pass. But now the Messianic psalm was raised by the disciples, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory to the highest"; while the multitude took up the joyous hosannas, spreading their garments on the way, and, bearing aloft branches of the kingly palm as emblems of victory, conducted their Messiah to the foot of Mount Moriah, for beyond that no dusty feet or travelling array might pass. Most of the hours of that Palm Sunday



THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

were taken up by the triumphal march. Entering the city, He looked round upon all things, and when eventide came returned to Bethany with the apostles. On Monday He returned to the city, and once more cleansed the courts of the temple of unholy traffic and healed the sick, while children sang hosannas to the Son of David; nor would He stop them because of the murmurs of the chief priests and scribes; and during these last days of His public ministry both scribes and Pharisees tried to add to their accusations by asking Him questions, that they might discredit Him either with the people or with those in authority. But He so baffled and refuted them that they soon avoided all controversy with Him, and, enraged by His parables, directed as they clearly were against themselves, they would have seized Him at once but for fear of the people.

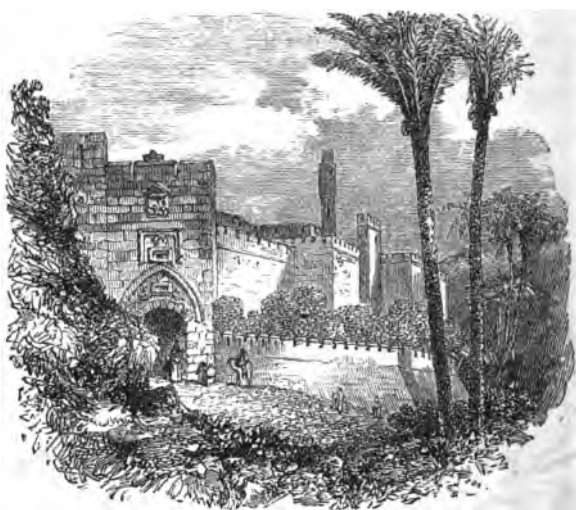
Like others who were originally good, the Pharisees had degenerated. Their aim and object at first was to preserve the institutions of their country and the principles of their religion from corruption by Greek and other foreign influences. But their doctrine and teaching had become a mere system of frivolous rules and outward observances, from which all life and spirit and wisdom had utterly departed, and their influence upon the nation as false guides and teachers of erroneous doctrine was so great, and as hypocrites and deceivers was so ruinous, that our Lord directed against them His most unsparing denunciations, and declared that publicans and harlots were more likely to enter the kingdom of heaven than these self-complacent and self-righteous, and seemingly religious instructors of the people. The publicans and harlots were



JESUS WEeping OVER JERUSALEM.

immoral, but theirs was an immorality open and notorious, known and read of all men. The scribes and Pharisees were equally traders in immorality, but it was of that specious kind that deceived men to their ruin, for it was presented to them under the guise of piety and good works; and our Lord's condemnation of them was proportionally severe and unrelenting. He forgave His personal enemies, and ever taught that those who would be His disciples must each one forgive his brother his trespasses; but for the public and professional deceivers of mankind—the false teachers and blind guides of the chosen people, who would neither enter into the kingdom themselves nor suffer others to enter in—He had no forgiveness, but only the most unsparing condemnation. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, *hypocrites*! Ye shut up the kingdom

of heaven, devour widows' houses, for a *pretence* make long prayers. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, ye fools and blind, ye whited sepulchres; outwardly beautiful, but within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness! Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation, of hell?" And then our Lord burst out into the pathetic lament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"



THE GATES OF JERUSALEM.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XVIII.

*Question.* What question was eagerly debated amongst the people during the preparation for the feast?

*Q.* To what place did Jesus come six days before the Passover?

*Q.* What happened during a repast that Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, had prepared for Him?

*Q.* Did any one object to Mary's costly offering to Christ?

*Q.* Of what class of persons did Judas thus become the type?

*Q.* Did Jesus accept Mary's offering?

*Q.* In what way did Jesus approach Jerusalem?

*Q.* Did Jesus rejoice?

*Q.* Why did Jesus mourn and weep over Jerusalem?

*Q.* When Jesus entered the city did He begin at once His ministry?

*Q.* Against whom then did Jesus direct His parables and His denunciations?

*Q.* Who were the Pharisees? and why did Jesus denounce them?

## LESSON XIX.

The last Paschal meal—Jesus washes His disciples' feet—Jesus discourses with His disciples—One of them shall betray Him—The divine paradox—Institution of the Holy Communion.

*Read St. Matt. xxvi. 1—25; St. Mark xiv. 1—21; St. Luke xxii. 1—23; St. John xiii. 1—38, &c.*

It was on the evening of Thursday in Holy Week (the 14th Nisan), as is generally believed, that Jesus and His apostles ate their last Paschal meal together. But before they began, our Lord, acting in His deep humility the part of a servant, began to wash the feet of each disciple, and wipe them with the towel with which He had girded Himself. Then the impetuous Peter, ashamed of their own pride, and filled with wonder at his Divine Master's unspeakable condescension, exclaimed, "Lord, dost *Thou* wash *my* feet?" "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" And when Jesus told him that if He washed him not, he (Peter) could have no part in Him, he entreated his Lord to wash not only his feet, but also his head and his hands. But of that Jesus assured him there was no need. He who has been bathed in the love of regeneration and renewed by the Holy Ghost needeth not save to wash his feet—needeth only daily cleansing from daily sins. The meal—the last they were to eat together before their Lord was taken from them—proceeded in holy confidence and love, for Jesus treated His disciples not as servants, but as *friends*; yet a dark sorrow filled His heart as He said to them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *One of you* shall betray Me." And the eleven faithful ones could only ask in dismay and with trembling anxiety, as they gazed one upon another, "Lord, is it I?" Jesus did not leave them in suspense. In answer to the whispered question of the beloved disciple, "Who is it, Lord?" He pointed out the traitor by giving the morsel of unleavened bread dipped in the sauce made of dates, raisins, and vinegar—to Judas Iscariot. Judas hardened his heart to what was, perhaps, Christ's last appeal, and henceforth he was possessed of a devil, and became the unresisting tool of the wicked one. He rose and left the holy company, and hastened to betray His Divine Master to the chief priests and Pharisees.

Then Jesus spoke to His faithful ones His last words of love and consolation. He gave them a new commandment of love—new because they and all His disciples were to love each other even as *Christ had loved them*. And He told them how it was expedient that His bodily presence be withdrawn, that He might return to them as a quickening Spirit. He had



hitherto been with them in an external manner; henceforth He would be with them in spirit. And this indwelling of Christ in the hearts of His disciples would be far more blessed and effectual than any mere outward presence. "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you. I go away and come again unto you." Christ's going away was a more powerful coming again to His disciples. He explained the wonderful paradox they could not understand: "I go to My Father, and *ye see Me no more; ye shall see Me because I go to the Father.*" The Holy Spirit should teach them all things—the "many things" that their faith was too weak to receive. Now their questions "grieved Him by their emptiness and by the misapprehension which they showed of all that He sought to impress upon them;" then all the mysteries of the kingdom of God would be made plain to them. Peter, in his impetuous zeal, declared he would lay down his life for his Lord's sake; but Jesus answered sadly, "The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice." Some time it was during this last meal that Jesus instituted the Holy Communion of His most blessed Body and Blood. Christians would no more partake of the Paschal meal because the Paschal lamb was only a type—a shadow or picture—of the true Paschal Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ; and after He made the One Sacrifice for sin by the sacrifice of Himself, the Paschal lamb would cease to be offered, and the Paschal meal would no more be celebrated. But our Lord has given His people something instead of it; He has given them the substance instead of the shadow, for in the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood we feed on Him by faith, and only by feeding on Him, by drawing spiritual nourishment, can our spiritual life be maintained; and by means of thus feeding spiritually upon Christ we enter into spiritual union with Him and with one another.

Then, after many more words of counsel and consolation, Jesus and His little company joined in singing probably the 115th to the 118th Psalm: "The sorrows of death compassed me, the pains of death got hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O God, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul!"

And, lastly, Jesus commended His beloved ones to His heavenly Father to keep them and to sanctify them, and He likewise prayed for all who should believe on Him through their word.

Thus strengthened and prepared, the faithful eleven follow Jesus by the soft calm light of the risen moon, and through the silence of the night, to the garden of Gethsemane, a retired spot where He was wont to pray at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON XIX.

*Question.* When did Jesus and His apostles partake together of their last Paschal meal?

*Q.* What did Jesus say to His disciples about His betrayal?

*Q.* Did Jesus tell them the name of the traitor?

*Q.* And when Jesus and His faithful eleven were thus left alone, what did Jesus say to them?

*Q.* Did He give them any especial command?

*Q.* What did Jesus say to His apostles that seemed a contradiction—a paradox?

*Q.* Did Jesus warn His disciples that they, and especially St. Peter, would soon give Him a sad proof of their want of faith and courage?

*Q.* Did Jesus mean that His disciples should go on celebrating the Paschal meal after the sacrifice of Himself upon the cross?

*Q.* What did He give His disciples instead of it?

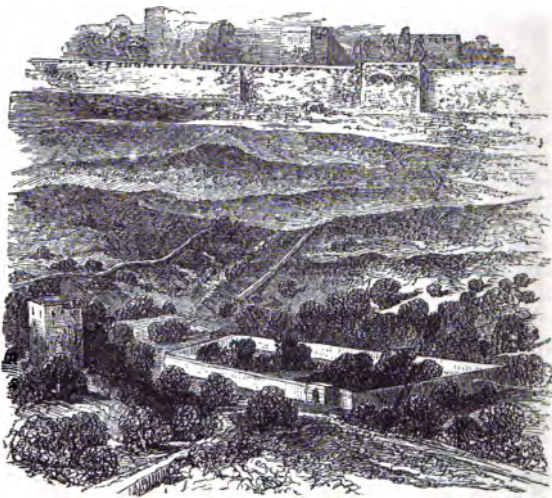
## LESSON XX.

Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane—The betrayal—Jesus led to the high priest's palace—Examined by Annas—Jesus before Caiaphas—The mock trial—Jesus in the guard-room.

*Read St. Matt. xxvi. 47—56; St. Mark xiv. 43—51; St. John xxiii. 1—27.*

OUR Lord knew that His hour of trial had come. The malice of wicked men and the assaults of the powers of darkness were now permitted, for a brief period, to do their worst against Him. Torture of body, and still worse, agony of mind, were close at hand. Nay, this exceeding sorrow, this awful desolation of soul, was even now upon Him. Telling His disciples (except the three who had witnessed His transfiguration) not to follow Him further, He took with Him only Peter and James and John. But in a little while the companionship of even these faithful friends was too much for Him. He must leave them behind; none, none can bear Him company. Alone must He tread the wine-press; and yet longing for human sympathy, He told them to watch with Him—to watch and pray. Then being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground; and the anguish of His soul wrung from Him the cry, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." Three times did He return to His three disciples, but each time He found them sleeping. "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" But it was too late then to watch, and there was no time to pray. *They* might indeed sleep on and take their rest; but *He*, the Son of man, was betrayed into the hands of sinners. And so it was. The trampling of feet, the glare of torches, and the murmur of

many voices breaking upon the stillness of the night, made it but too plain that the traitor was at hand. And with him came a mixed company of people—scribes, Pharisees, priests, servants, and soldiers. Jewish officers—a detachment of the temple guard—were not ashamed to bring Roman soldiers to seize their countryman, and the rulers and teachers of the people, men in authority, scrupled not to lead an armed rabble against the unoffending prophet of Nazareth. And Jesus meekly resigned Himself into their hands, only bidding them to let His disciples go their way. Peter, indeed, drew a sword in his Master's defence, and smote off an ear of a servant of the high priest; but Jesus restrained Him, saying, "Put up thy sword into thy sheath. I resist not, neither must you, My



GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

disciples. The cup which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?" In a little while all His disciples—even Peter and James and John—forsook Him and fled.

Jesus was led straight to the palace of the high priest. Here He was immediately brought for examination before Annas, the ex-high priest, and father-in-law of Caiaphas, the actual high priest.

This crafty Sadducee, moved by a bitter hostility, and anxious to find something definite whereof he might accuse Him, questioned Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine, but being unable to accomplish his purpose, sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas. Before this open enemy and other

members of the Sanhedrim, as hostile and unscrupulous as himself, our Lord was now arraigned. To insure conviction, these unjust judges had sought out false witnesses; but their testimony was so contradictory, that they could prove nothing against Him. Moreover, the calm silence of their prisoner baffled and enraged them. "Answerest Thou nothing?" said Caiaphas; "what is it that these witness against Thee?" But still Jesus spoke not. Thus other means and other evidence became necessary, and Caiaphas determined to convict his prisoner upon His own testimony. He shall criminate Himself; so, rising from his seat, exclaimed, "I adjure thee, by the living God, to tell us whether Thou art the Christ the Son of God?" And He answered, "I AM; *and hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.*" Then the high priest rent his linen robes, after the manner of the Jews, when filled with horror or dismay at something that shocked or lacerated their feelings, and exclaimed, "BLASPHEMY! What further need have we of witnesses? See, *now* ye have *heard* His blasphemy! What think ye? What is your decision?" And they shouted back the answer, "A man of death! guilty of death!"

Then Jesus was hurried away to the guard-room, there to await the formal condemnation and sentence of the whole Sanhedrim, which would assemble in their hall of judgment at break of day.

Meanwhile, in the central courtyard, amongst the servants and lower officials, Peter waited to see the end; and, alas! here he thrice denied—even with oaths and asseverations—all knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth. But when the Master so denied turned and looked upon him—probably as He was crossing the courtyard to the guard-room—Peter remembered his Lord's warning and prophecy; and smitten to the heart by his own weakness and ingratitude, he went out and wept bitterly.

And then our blessed Lord endured the malice, and spite, and derision, and cruelty, and vulgar insolence of the wretched menials and officials of the guard-room. "They spat in His face; they smote Him with rods; they struck Him with their fists and with their open palms. Blindfolding His eyes, they hit Him again and again, with the repeated question, 'Prophecy to us, O Messiah, who it is that smote Thee.'"

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XX.

*Question.* Where was the garden of Gethsemane, whither Jesus went with His disciples after the Paschal meal, and what did He do there?

*Q.* Was there anything remarkable in His prayer?

*Q.* Did His disciples watch with Him?

*Q.* What became of Jesus and His disciples?

*Q.* What was done with Jesus after He was brought to the high priest's palace?

*Q.* Was our Lord's trial a mockery?

*Q.* What did Caiaphas say to Jesus?

*Q.* What was our Lord's reply?

*Q.* What was the result of the trial?

## LESSON XXI.

Second trial before the Sanhedrim—The condemnation—Jesus before Pilate—Sent to Herod—Pilate gives sentence against Him—The punishment of the Jews.

*Read St. Matt. xxvii. 1, 2, 11—31; St. Mark xv. 1; St. Luke xxii. 66—71; St. John xviii. 28—40, xix. 1—16.*

WHEN day dawned the Jewish council or Sanhedrim assembled again and in haste to ratify in their own hall the hasty judgment passed upon their prisoner in the palace of the high priest, which, being by night, was irregular and illegal. So, again putting to Jesus the question, "Art Thou the Christ?" He answered, "If I tell you ye will not believe; and if I ask you a question you will not answer Me." Yet, to leave them without excuse as to who He was, He added, "But henceforth shall the Son of man sit on the Right Hand of the Power of God." "Art Thou then," they demanded, "the Son of God?" and Jesus affirmed the truth, "Ye say that I am. Ye speak the truth in saying that I am the Son of God;" and they all echoed the words of Caiaphas, "What further need have we of witness? for we ourselves have heard from His own mouth."

Then the excited and clamorous judges hurried their prisoner from the chamber of the Sanhedrim to the judgment-hall, or Prætorium of Pilate, the Roman governor, that he might ratify and carry out the judgment they had already passed upon Him. But Pilate would not do this without inquiry, so he asked what accusation they brought against their prisoner. This offended them. Was it not enough that they had both tried and condemned Him?

Then Pilate questioned Jesus Himself, and turning to the Holy One, he asked, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Yes, He was Messiah, and therefore King, but not in the Roman sense, for, said Christ, "My kingdom is not of this world." He was then innocent of any treason against Pilate's master, the Emperor of Rome. Pilate therefore told Christ's priestly accusers that he found no fault in Him; but they answered fiercely, "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, throughout the whole country, beginning from Galilee even to this place."

When Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee, he quickly decided to send Him to the Tetrarch of Galilee, Herod Antipas, who was then in Jerusalem. This would at once relieve him of a difficulty. Let Herod say what should be done with the Galilean Prophet whom the Jews of Jerusalem called a malefactor, and by this compliment he would propitiate Herod. So Pilate sent Jesus to him, but Herod, disappointed that our Lord would neither amuse him by miracles, nor even reply to his questions, mocked Him—he and his body-guard making sport of Him—and, arraying Him in a festive robe, sent Him back to Pilate. Then the perplexed and wavering governor once more told the accusing priests and scribes that he found no fault in Him, no, nor yet Herod; and even when the Holy One was brought before them, bleeding and bruised by the cruel Roman scourge, they still repeated their piercing cry of “Crucify Him!” Set not this man free, but Barrabbas. “Shall I crucify your King?” asked Pilate in mockery; but the Jews answered, “We have no king but Cæsar” (neither Jehovah nor Jesus shall reign over them). “If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend.” This decided him. These Jews might work his ruin with the suspicious and unsparing Tiberius. He could not run the risk; washing his hands before the multitude, to signify that he was innocent of their prisoner’s unjust condemnation and death—that he threw the guilt of it upon them; and, while they shouted the terrible imprecation, “*His blood be on us and on our children*,” the unjust judge pronounced the sentence of death by crucifixion—to the cross.

Thus the Jews, taking the guilt of Christ’s blood upon themselves and upon their children, and renouncing allegiance to any other king but Cæsar, forced the Roman governor to crucify their Messiah. And within a few years the Roman Cæsar destroyed the Jews as a nation. Rebelling against his tyranny, or the tyranny of those who governed them in his name, his armies came against them like a whirlwind, crucifying thousands of these very Jews and their miserable descendants on whose heads, as well as upon their own, they had invoked God’s vengeance. Nothing was spared. Myriads of the people, the city, and the temple, perished in one common ruin, while a miserable remnant were sold into slavery and scattered amongst the nations; and in every country they were treated with bitter contempt and the most unsparing cruelty.

Thus, when Jesus was crucified (though a season of grace was granted), “the axe was laid at the root of Jewish nationality,” and in a little while Jerusalem became “one vast

cemetery—an Aceldama, a field of blood, a potter's field to bury strangers in."

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXI.

- Question.* What took place at break of day on Friday in Holy Week?  
*Q.* How did the Sanhedrim proceed?  
*Q.* How did our Lord answer His judges?  
*Q.* Did they take Him to Pilate for judgment?  
*Q.* Was Pilate willing to ratify their sentence without inquiry?  
*Q.* What did our Lord's accusers say to this?  
*Q.* What did Pilate resolve to do when he heard of Galilee? and how did Pilate still try to deliver Jesus from His enemies?  
*Q.* Were the Jews willing to take upon themselves the guilt of Christ's unjust condemnation?  
*Q.* What judgment fell upon the Jewish nation within a few years?

### LESSON XXII.

Golgotha—The crucifixion—Pilate's inscription—Mockery of the people—The scribes and Pharisees—The penitent thief—Mary and the beloved disciple—Darkness at mid-day—Christ's last words.

*Read St. Matt.* xxvii. 32—56; *St. Mark* xv. 20—41; *St. Luke* xxiii. 26—49; *St. John* xix. 17—37.

EXECUTION followed immediately upon judgment. Two criminals were chosen to suffer with our Lord, and to strike terror into others of their class. Then the miserable procession—the heralds who proclaimed aloud the offences, real or supposed, of those about to suffer, the prisoners, the centurion and his armed soldiers—set out amidst, no doubt, a great concourse of spectators, on its dreary march, from the Prætorium on the western hill to Golgotha. Exhausted by long sufferings, Jesus was soon unable, we may suppose, to bear any further the burden of His cross.

And so they laid it on Simon of Cyrene, who, coming from the country, was just then entering the city, and he bore it after our blessed Lord. Arrived at Golgotha\*—a place outside the gates of Jerusalem, but in the centre of its life and bustle Jesus suffered crucifixion—that most cruel mode of execution, which seems to include a long continuance of all the horrors that torment, shame, and lingering death can heap upon a human being.

Yes, while Jesus in His divine forgiveness prayed for the very men who were nailing Him to the cross, He exclaimed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Pilate still followed, with sarcastic mockery, for the title he wrote to be affixed to our Lord's cross was, THE KING OF THE

\* The Hebrew name of the place of crucifixion, signifying a "skull." The Latin word *calvaria* may be rendered "a bare skull."

Jews ; and when they complained to him of this title, saying, "Write not 'The King of the Jews,' but that 'He said I am the King the Jews,'" he returned the curt and scornful answer, "What I have written I have written." Thus Pilate unconsciously bore witness to the fulfilment of all prophecy.

The centurion kept four of his soldiers to guard the cross, and these men, in dividing Christ's apparel amongst themselves, unconsciously fulfilled the prophecy : "They parted My garments among them, and for My vesture did they cast lots."

For six long hours (from nine in the morning till three o'clock in the evening) did our Lord endure the cross and despise the shame. There He, the Holy One, who knew no sin, was made a sin-offering for us, that by His death He might reconcile us to God. There He hung amidst the mockery of the people, who bade Him come down from the cross and save Himself, since He said He could destroy the temple and build it in three days. The scribes and Pharisees were also there to look upon Him whom they had delivered to death. And (seeing that He wrought no miracle for His own deliverance) they exclaimed, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save. Let Him now descend from the cross, and we will believe Him to be Christ the King of Israel."

Even the dying criminals on either side cast the same in His teeth : "If thou be the Christ save Thyself and us." Yet (oh wondrous power of the cross of Christ !) while one robber found a relief to his own sufferings by blasphemous revilings, the other, softening into penitence and prayer, received from Jesus the blessed assurance that he should be with Him that day in Paradise.

Near the cross stood Mary the mother of Jesus, the sword of which the aged Simeon had prophesied, piercing her own bosom ; and with her, besides the holy women, stood John, the beloved disciple ; to him He committed the care of the heart-stricken Mary, saying ; "Woman, behold thy Son !" and to John, "Behold thy mother !" The scribes and Pharisees had asked Jesus, during the days of His ministry, for a sign from heaven, and now they saw one ; for lo, at mid-day the light of the sun faded, and for three hours the horror of a great darkness overspread the land, so that the gazers on the sad scene fled terror-stricken, wailing and beating upon their breasts at what they felt in their consciences was a sign of the wrath of God.

Meanwhile, as Jesus still hung upon the cross in darkness and in agony, the anguish of His soul wrung from Him the bitter cry, "Eli, Eli, lama Sabacthani !" "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and the fever that raged within found expression in the words "I thirst." Then one of



those who watched took the sponge (that served as a cork) from the mouth of the earthen vessel of sour wine, which was the drink of the soldiers, and dipping it in the liquor, raised it to the burning lips of the dying Christ. Two more cries—the one a prayer (“*Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit*”), the other an exclamation of triumph, “*It is finished!*” were uttered by our Lord, and then, whilst the terrors of an earthquake (yawning chasms and falling rocks, and trembling of the solid ground beneath the feet of the thousands who crowded the streets of the once Holy City) filled every heart with dismay, He bowed His head and yielded up His life, a willing Sacrifice for the sins of men. And no sooner was this great Sacrifice accomplished than the vail of the temple (the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies) was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, to signify that men might now enter into the Holy of Holies—into the very presence of God—by the Blood of Jesus—by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is, to say, His flesh! \* He, when He had overcome the sharpness of death, opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

From generation to generation the Paschal lamb had shadowed forth, as by a picture, the true Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who was to be slain for us in the fulness of time. And now, since Christ the true Paschal Lamb has been offered, the type has been fulfilled in the antitype, and instead of feeding on the Paschal Lamb, like the Jews of old, Christians feed spiritually on the blessed Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion, and thus draw all their spiritual life and strength from Him.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXII.

*Question.* Was our Lord crucified that same day?

*Q.* Was it the custom for those who were to be crucified to carry each one his cross to the place of execution? and was it so in this instance?

*Q.* Was Jesus crucified as soon as He reached Golgotha?

*Q.* What title did Pilate affix to the cross of Jesus, and what did he say when the Jews objected to it?

*Q.* How did the Roman soldiers unconsciously fulfil a prophecy?

*Q.* For how long did Jesus hang upon the cross before He yielded up His spirit?

*Q.* And meanwhile did the scribes and Pharisees and people deride Him?

*Q.* But in what wondrous manner was the power of the cross of Christ manifested?

*Q.* What sign in the heavens did Jesus now give to the priests and Pharisees who had demanded this of Him?

*Q.* Can you repeat our Lord's sayings while upon the cross as recorded by the evangelists?

\* Heb. x. 19, 20.

## LESSON XXIII.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take charge of Christ's body—It is laid in Joseph's tomb—Sunday morning—He is not here but risen—Mary Magdalene and the women—Peter and John—Deceit of the scribes and Pharisees.

*Read St. Matt.* xxvii. 57—66; *St. Mark* xv. 42—47; *St. Luke* xxiii. 54—56; *St. John* xix. 38—42.

THE miserable men who had murdered the Lord of Life, brought a dreadful doom upon their city and nation, and having perpetrated a crime the exceeding sinfulness of which it is impossible to fathom, they were now troubled about a question of ceremonial defilement. As the Jewish Sabbath began at six o'clock in the evening, and the day was now fast waning to its close, they were anxious that the bodies of those who had been crucified should be taken down each from his cross; for it was reckoned a pollution of the Sabbath to allow the body of one who had been crucified or hanged to remain upon the cross or gallows during its hallowed hours. And the approaching Sabbath was likewise a solemn feast day. So *St. John* tells us that "the Jews, because it was the preparation" (the Friday, or day before the Sabbath), "that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day—for that Sabbath day was a high day" (being the Sabbath in the Passover Week) "besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."\* And when the soldiers came to put an end before sunset to the wretched flickering lire of the crucified, they broke the legs of the two malefactors; but seeing that Jesus was already dead, they broke not His legs, thus fulfilling the prophecy conveyed in the command respecting the Paschal lamb, "A bone of it shall not be broken."† But a soldier, to make sure that Jesus was dead, thrust a spear into His side, and forthwith came there out (of the wound) blood and water. This was a proof of His death; and we may regard the water and blood as types of the two sacraments which He has given us, and which flow from Him.

The bodies of the malefactors were doubtless thrown into a common grave; but the sacred body of our Lord was lovingly cared for by two rich and influential Jewish counselors—Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Joseph begged of Pilate the body of Jesus, and then wrapped in the fine linen he had provided, and anointed with the ointments and spices—the hundred pounds weight of myrrh and perfumed aloe-wood—that Nicodemus had bought for the burial, the

\* *St. John* xix. 31.

† *Exod.* xii. 46.

body was carefully laid in the new rock-hewn tomb within a garden belonging to Joseph of Arimathea, close by the place of crucifixion, and the entrance was made secure by rolling into its groove the heavy stone door of the sepulchre. Then Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Cleopas, who had sadly watched the hasty but reverent burial given to the body of their Lord by Joseph and Nicodemus, marking well the place of sepulchre, hastened home to make ready the spices and ointments with which to complete the embalming of the body as soon as the Sabbath should be over. These women were first at the tomb on the Sunday morning: starting even while it was yet dark, and reaching the sepulchre at sunrise, their anxious question, "Who shall roll us away the stone?" was quickly answered, for they found the vault not only open but empty. Then Mary Magdalene hastened back to the city to find St. Peter and St. John and tell them of her discovery. Meanwhile Joanna and Salome had arrived, and stood by the tomb, and, lo, an angel in bright clothing said to them, "Fear not ye, ye are seeking Jesus the crucified; He is not here; for He is risen as He said. Come hither and see the place where the Lord lay." And they, too, are to hasten to proclaim the news. "Go quickly," said the angel, "and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and behold He goeth before you into Galilee. There shall ye behold Him. Lo! I have told you!" So they returned to Jerusalem.

But now St. Peter and St. John, who on their way had met Mary Magdalene and heard her report, came in haste to the sepulchre. St. John, outrunning St. Peter, arrived first, and stooping down *looked* into the open tomb. But the more impetuous Peter *entered* it, and there he saw the linen clothes—the cloth that had wrapped the body, and in another place the napkin that had bound the head, and both were carefully folded as by loving hands. The sepulchre, then, had not been rudely opened and rifled of its contents. No marks of haste and violence were visible, but evidence rather of reverent service and pious care. Then the apostles began to perceive the truth, and to remember how their Lord had said that He would rise from the grave. Then they likewise went to seek their brethren to make known to them the joyful news of the Resurrection. But Mary Magdalene, who had returned to the sepulchre, and was looking into it as she wept, saw two angels in white apparel, sitting one at the head and the other at the foot where the body of Jesus had lain. They asked her why she wept, and she had scarcely told them the cause of her trouble—that some one had taken away the body of her Lord—

when she heard again the question, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" And she, taking slight notice of the person who thus addressed her—supposing him to be the gardener—made answer, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." But when the voice called her by her name, "Mary," she knew that He who spoke to her was the Lord, and in the ecstasy of her joy she stooped to clasp His knees; but He gently restrained her, saying, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended unto My Father, but go and tell My brethren that I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God!"



THE WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE.

After His ascent to His Father, He will return to her and to them, and abide with them in a spiritual and far closer union than had ever before been possible.

But Mary was to bear the solemn message to Christ's brethren, the apostles, and she hastened to them with the glorious tidings that *she had seen the Lord*. And the other women were able to support her testimony, for to them Jesus likewise appeared, saying to them, "Fear not, go bid My brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see Me."

The chief priests and scribes and Pharisees had employed

false witnesses at Christ's trial, and now again they added lie to lie, and heaped deceit upon deceit, for when the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre hastened to them with their story of the miraculous removal of the body, they bribed them to say that the disciples had stolen it away whilst they slept.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXIII.

*Question.* With what particular request did the scribes and Pharisees go to Pilate?

*Q.* And when the soldiers came to remove the bodies what prophecy did they unconsciously fulfil?

*Q.* When a soldier pierced our Lord's side with a spear what issued from it?

*Q.* Of what was this significant?

*Q.* What became of the body of Jesus?

*Q.* Who came to the tomb very early on Sunday morning bringing spices and ointment to complete the embalming of the body, and what happened?

*Q.* Who likewise arrived at the tomb?

*Q.* Who next arrived at the sepulchre?

*Q.* What conclusion did St. John and St. Peter draw from what they saw at the sepulchre?

*Q.* What did the priests and scribes and Pharisees say when the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre told them of the miraculous removal of the body of Jesus?

### LESSON XXIV.

The forty days—Jesus and the two disciples at Emmaus—Jesus shows Himself to His disciples—His solemn commission to them—He appears to the eleven—Thomas—Jesus and the disciples in Galilee—Christ's last words to His apostles—The Ascension.

*Read St. Luke xxiv.; St. John xx.*

AGAIN on this same Easter Day on which Jesus appeared to the women and to St. Peter (St. Luke tells us\*) two of the disciples (Cleopas and another) were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and talking sadly of the utter destruction of their hopes by the death of Jesus of Nazareth, whom the chief priests and rulers had crucified and slain. Yet they had trusted that He would have redeemed Israel, but now how could that come to pass? They had, indeed, on this, the third day since the crucifixion, heard strange stories from certain women of their company who had found the tomb empty, and seen visions of angels, "but Him they saw not." Then a stranger, Who had joined them,—reproaching them for their slowness in understanding the prophecies which testified of a suffering Messiah that sufferings should precede His glory,—“beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things

\* St. Luke xxiv. 34.

concerning Himself." So, still talking of these things, they came to Emmaus, and the day being far spent the disciples pressed their companion to tarry with them, and join them in their evening meal. And "as He sat at meat with them He took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight."\* Then, while their hearts still glowed within them at their Lord's discourse, they returned in haste to Jerusalem and told their brethren how the Lord Himself had opened to them the Scriptures, and how He was known to them in breaking of bread. And the ten (Thomas only was absent) added their testimony to the reality of their Lord's resurrection, for they answered, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon"! And as they talked together Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said, "Peace be with you." And when He saw the terror of the disciples, who supposed that they saw a spirit, He asked, "Why are ye troubled? . . . See My hands and My feet, that it is I; handle Me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." And after eating with them, He said again, "Peace be unto you." Moreover, He solemnly commissioned them as His apostles—"As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." And breathing on them (with the breath of His glorified Human Nature), He bestowed on them the gift of the Holy Ghost, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted to them: whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Thus this gift of the Holy Ghost was an earnest of the still fuller outpouring of the Divine Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Seven days afterwards, on the following Sunday, the apostles, including Thomas, were again assembled in the Upper Chamber with closed doors for fear of their enemies, the chief priests and rulers. And as they worshipped, Jesus once more appeared to them, and calmed their fears with His usual benediction, "Peace be unto you." Then, turning to Thomas (who had not seen his risen Lord, nor believed his brethren's testimony concerning the Resurrection), He gently rebuked his want of faith, and bade him put his finger into the prints of the nails and thrust his hand into the wound in His side that he might believe. Now he needed not this proof, for, ashamed of his unbelief, he exclaimed, "My Lord, and My God"! Nor did his Lord reject his penitent adoration, but told him that those are more blessed who, not having seen, yet still believe.

And now, the Passover being over, the apostles returned, according to their Lord's command, to Galilee, where most of

\* St. Luke xxiv. 13—31.

them had recourse to their old employment of fishing on the Galilean lake. One morning at dawn of day, after a night of fruitless toil, they saw a stranger on the shore, who, after questioning them of their success, told them to throw the net to the right side of the boat, and they should find. And so it was. Their net was instantly filled with a multitude of fishes—thus again the throwing of the gospel net and the many who should be gathered into the Church were prophesied—and they perceived it was the Lord. Again, on the shore, the apostles ate with their risen Lord, who Himself distributed to them the bread and likewise the fish. Here, too, Jesus graciously accepted St. Peter's thrice repeated confession of love to Him, and laid on him His charge to feed His sheep; and likewise signified to him by what death he should glorify God. Christ's words in reference to St. John may mean that he (and perhaps he only of the apostles) should tarry till his Lord's coming in judgment at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Again, on the mountain in Galilee Jesus met not only His apostles, but probably the more than five hundred brethren who became also witnesses of the Resurrection. Here, too, our Lord made known to His assembled Church that all power was given to Him in heaven and in earth—that they were to teach and to baptize all nations, and that He would be with them always to the end of the world.

St. Paul alone tells us that "after that He was seen of James,"\* but of this appearance we have no other or further record.

After forty days from the crucifixion were accomplished, the eleven apostles were to behold a greater Transfiguration than the three had witnessed in the high mountain. Meeting them in Jerusalem, Jesus led them out towards Bethany, still talking with them on the way of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

He would not satisfy their curiosity about the times and seasons, but promised that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. And for that baptism they were to tarry at Jerusalem. After that they should be witnesses of Him not only in all Judæa, but to the uttermost parts of the earth. Then as they yet beheld Him He was parted from them; and, blessing them with uplifted hands He entered the cloud of glory—the symbol of God's presence—and ascended to heaven to the Right Hand of the Father. But two angels in white apparel told the entranced apostles, whose upward gaze was still steadfastly fixed on their departing Lord, that He should come again in like manner. And this blessed promise

\* 1 Cor. xv. 7.

is still the hope and expectation of the Church. Meanwhile, though His bodily and visible presence is withdrawn, His real though spiritual presence is promised to His Church, and God the Father's gift of the Holy Spirit—the Comforter—is to abide in it and to work by it.



THE ASCENSION.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXIV.

*Question.* To whom, besides the women and St. Peter (as St. Luke tells us), did Jesus show Himself on this first Easter Day?

*Q.* And what happened while the disciples talked together in Jerusalem?

*Q.* What else did Jesus say to His astonished disciples?

*Q.* But was the Holy Ghost fully poured out upon them?

*Q.* What happened seven days after, on the following Sunday?

*Q.* Where, and at what time, did Jesus next appear to His disciples?

*Q.* Can you relate any other appearances of our Lord?

*Q.* What great event happened on the fortieth day from the crucifixion?



## Part II.

### THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

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#### LESSON I.

The disciples in the upper room—Prayer and supplication—Matthias chosen apostle in place of Judas—The day of Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Ghost—St. Peter's first sermon—Early days of the Church—St. Peter's miraculous cure of the cripple—St. Peter and St. John before the Sanhedrim—First hymn of the Christian Church.

*Read Acts i.—iv.*

THE apostles returned to Jerusalem with great joy ; for they had all been witnesses of that greater transfiguration—the glorious ascension of Jesus Christ to the Right Hand of the Father as the ever-living Saviour and perpetual High Priest of His people, continually pleading there the one perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice He had made upon the cross, once for all, for the sins of the world.

From His throne of glory He would rule the Church and the world, for all power was given Him in heaven and on earth, and in a little while He would return to His disciples by the Spirit, and abide with them in a more intimate and effectual manner than when He had been with them by an external and bodily presence.

The apostles were not to begin their mission work, but to tarry at Jerusalem until the Holy Ghost, the promise of the Father—the Comforter whom Jesus so often declared He would send to them—was bestowed upon them and upon the infant Church. Then they would be endowed with power and spiritual understanding, and the Church would become a Holy Temple to the Lord, having one faith, one hope, and one baptism.

And while waiting for this promised outpouring of the Spirit, the apostles and other believers in Jesus—His brothers, the Blessed Mother of our Lord, the Holy women, about 120 in number—continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. Their faith in the direction of the risen and ascended Saviour was shown by the way in which they turned to Him and sought His guidance in the ordination of an apostle in the place of

the traitor Judas ; for though they cast lots they prayed to Him to decide whether Barsabas or Matthias should succeed to the vacant office ; and when the lot fell upon Matthias he was numbered with the apostles as chosen by the Lord Himself.

Thus day after day they continued constant in prayer waiting upon God. Nor did they pray and wait in vain, for on the day of Pentecost—ten days after the ascent from Olivet—the infant Church was quickened into life by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It was the birthday of the Church—the ingathering of the first-fruits of Christ's redemption. The sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, the cloven tongues like unto flames of fire resting upon each disciple, the speaking with divers tongues, the gifts of utterance of knowledge and spiritual insight were the supernatural signs that the Holy Ghost was indeed poured out upon the Church as a Body and upon each member of it individually ; and the fruits of the Spirit were immediately manifested in the love, joy, peace, purity, zeal, boldness, and spiritual understanding of those who were thus partakers of that blessed gift of God in Christ Jesus.

The preaching of the apostles was now with power. They were no longer timid and doubting, but with all boldness they preached Jesus and the resurrection. St. Peter's first sermon went straight to the hearts of men, and by the power of the Spirit working by means of the apostle's words they were convinced of sin and led in penitence and faith to acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world. In Jerusalem 3,000 souls were thus added to the Church, and being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ they continued steadfast in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship.

And that Jesus was with His Church and continuing amongst His people those mighty works by which He had shown Himself to be the Son of God with power was proved by the miracles wrought in His name by the apostles ; for the miracles were His, though the word of healing or of life was spoken by those whom He had sent. Thus, when after the cure of the cripple by St. Peter at the Beautiful gate of the temple,\* the people were filled with wonder and came running together into Solomon's porch, Peter said to them, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this ? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk ?" Then he told them how by this miracle Jesus was glorified—that Holy One whom they had delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate ; but God had raised Him from the dead, and through faith in His name this man had been made perfectly sound in the presence of them all. In

\* Acts iii.

this way the Holy Ghost, by the words of St. Peter, convinced them of sin, and prepared the way for their repentance ; and when the apostle saw the blessed change, and that they were conscience-stricken, he gave them hope and comfort. "I wot that through ignorance ye did it. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." But while he yet spake to them and preached to them Jesus and the resurrection, the Sadducees (who denied the resurrection) came with the Levite guard of the temple and their captain and arrested St. Peter and St. John, that they might be brought before the council of Jewish judges in the morning. But by means of St. Peter's inspired preaching about 5,000 men believed that Jesus was the Christ and were added to the Church.

The chief priests and scribes and Pharisees supposed that when they caused Jesus to be put to death His miracles would cease, and that after His crucifixion no one could possibly believe Him to be the Messiah ; but now, to their dismay, they find that a wonderful miracle had been wrought in His name before the people, and that many of them believed on Him. Nor would any fear of consequences tempt St. Peter to again deny His Lord. Next morning the apostles were examined by the Sanhedrim touching the cure of the impotent man. "By what power," they were asked, "or by what name, have ye done this?" And St. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, confessed boldly that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified—the stone set at naught by the builders—was this man made whole : neither was there salvation in any other.

Annas and Caiaphas were both there, and gladly would they and the other judges have punished the apostles with death, but they feared the people, and contented themselves with threatening them, and forbidding them to speak and to teach any more in the name of Jesus ; then they let them go, although St. Peter and St. John both refused to abide by their commands. "Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Then the assembled disciples lifted their voices in praise to God—the first Christian hymn of which we have any account—and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and with love one to another, a love which suffered none to lack, nor to keep for each one for his own use more than he needed for the supply of his own wants.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON I.

*Question.* Were the apostles to begin their mission work immediately after Jesus' ascension ?

*Q.* What would be the effect of this outpouring of the Holy Ghost ?

*Q.* And meanwhile how did the disciples—about one hundred and twenty in number—pass their time?

*Q.* What happened on the day of Pentecost?

*Q.* Did any special signs accompany this outpouring of the Holy Ghost?

*Q.* What particular or special gifts were bestowed upon the apostles?

*Q.* How many souls were added to the Church by St. Peter's first sermon?

*Q.* What proofs have we that Jesus was with His Church, beholding all and directing all?

*Q.* What notable miracle was wrought soon after the day of Pentecost by St. Peter?

*Q.* Did this miracle excite the attention of the rulers, and what was the consequence?

## LESSON II.

Principles of Christ's kingdom—Ananias and Sapphira—Signs and wonders wrought by the apostles—Hostility of the rulers—The apostles are imprisoned—An angel delivers them—Before the Sanhedrim—The first deacons—St. Stephen before the Sanhedrim—Martyrdom of St. Stephen.

*Read Acts v.—vii.*

THE Kingdom of Christ upon earth, being like its Divine Founder of heavenly origin, is governed by principles altogether different from the kingdoms of this world. They are founded upon the principle of self-interest, and are ruled by laws that are enforced by pains and penalties. But Christ's kingdom is founded upon the principle of love, and in the early days of the Church this principle was fully carried out, as we see in the picture of the new society drawn for us in the second and fourth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul," and they "had all things in common. . . . And as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet," that they might distribute to those who had need. Barnabas, a Levite of Cyprus, one of the few wealthy men who had joined the infant Church, had thus disposed of his land, and his example was imitated by another disciple named Ananias. But their motives were altogether different. Barnabas was moved by love for his poorer brethren; Ananias sought the applause of men: he could not have believed that the apostles were indeed the discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart, for bringing them only a part of the price of the land he would have them believe that he had brought all of it, and thus he lied "not unto men but unto God." And God smote him that he died; and his wife Sapphira, who was a sharer of the deceit, likewise fell down dead at St. Peter's feet;

so that great fear came upon all the Church. Deceivers were warned, and dared not join the apostolic company; but true "believers were the more added to the Lord . . . multitudes both of men and women." And Jesus endowed His apostles with His own miraculous and healing power in a wonderful manner, for even the shadow of St. Peter falling upon the sick or the infirm, or those vexed with unclean spirits (whom the people in their faith brought forth into the streets), were made perfectly whole of every disease or ailment.

The high priest and the Sadducees were filled with indignation. Once more they "laid their hands on the apostles,



THE DEATH OF SAPPHIRA.

and put them in the common prison; but it was only to add to their own confusion, for the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them forth, telling them to speak yet again" to the people all the words of this life—the new life of faith in Christ and the doctrine of eternal life in Him. Then the Jewish rulers, "doubting whereunto these things would grow," and fearing the people lest they should be stoned, brought them before the council without violence, and Gamaliel warned them to beware lest haply they should be

but fighting against God. So they beat the apostles and let them go, laying fresh commands upon them that they should not speak in the name of Jesus; but they rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer for that name, "and ceased not in the temple and in every house to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

But all was not peace in the Church itself. Rivalry soon sprung up between the Hebrews (or Jews of Palestine) and the Grecians, or foreign Jews.\* The Grecians complained that undue favour was shown to the Hebrews, and that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration or distribution of alms from the common offertory fund. So the apostles ordained seven men "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" as deacons, who should attend to all such matters; and as they all had Greek names, they were probably Hellenists or Grecians. One of these was Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and he full of faith and power did great wonders and miracles among the people.

But his teaching about the catholicity of the Church, the passing away of the Jewish religion, of the temple and the Holy City, excited the hatred of his fellow-countrymen, especially of the "Libertines" (who probably were Jews freed from Roman slavery) and other foreign Jews, who charged him before the Sanhedrim with speaking blasphemy against their holy places and the law of Moses. He boldly defended all that he had really said, and acknowledged that he preached the risen Jesus as the Messiah of promise; and then, turning round upon his accusers and judges he charged them with being His betrayers and murderers. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears," he exclaimed, "ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did so do ye." This cut them to the heart, and gnashing upon him with their teeth they dragged him out of the city and stoned him, while he, praying for his murderers and commending his Spirit to the Lord Jesus, "fell asleep." In that hour of trial St. Stephen, the first martyr of Jesus, saw Jesus *standing* (not sitting) at the right hand of God, gazing at him and ready to receive him. And the Collect for St. Stephen's Day, "O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those who suffer for Thee," seems to note the significance of the attitude. Important events followed upon St. Stephen's martyrdom, but these will be considered in the next lesson.

\* In the New Testament Hebrews mean Jews who lived at home in their own land. *Grecians* (in the Greek, Hellenists) were Jews of the dispersion—Jews living abroad; and the term *Greeks* applies to both natives of Greece and Gentiles speaking the Greek language.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON II.

*Question.* Upon what principle is Christ's kingdom founded?

*Q.* Was this principle of love more fully carried out in the primitive Church than it is now?

*Q.* What rich man sold his possessions and gave the money to the Church?

*Q.* And who, professing to do so, kept back a part of the price, and so lied to the Holy Ghost?

*Q.* What was the result?

*Q.* Did the rulers put an end to the preaching of the apostles?

*Q.* To whose counsel did the judges of the Sanhedrim listen?

*Q.* Did they liberate the apostles?

*Q.* Did the apostles obey the commands of the rulers?

*Q.* Was all peace at this time within the Church?

*Q.* Did the teaching of Stephen give offence to his countrymen?

*Q.* What was the consequence?

## LESSON III.

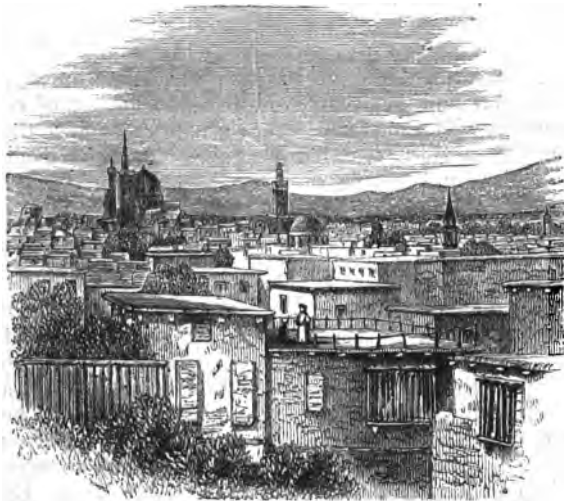
Persecution of the Church of Jerusalem—The disciples scattered—Philip's mission to the Samaritans—St. Peter and Simon Magus—Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch—Saul chief persecutor of the Church—Saul's journey to Damascus—His conversion—He is baptized and preaches Christ—St. Paul escapes from Damascus to Jerusalem—Leaves Jerusalem for Tarsus.

*Read Acts viii.—ix. 30.*

THE martyrdom of St. Stephen was followed by a fierce persecution of the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem, so that most of them except the apostles fled to the northern parts of Judæa, Samaria, Phœnicia, and the island of Cyprus, and they were thus "scattered abroad" like seed thrown broadcast from the hand of the sower, and thus the Church grew and multiplied, for "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." Amongst those was Philip the deacon, who preached Christ to the Samaritans. They had given too ready heed to Simon Magus, a magician, who by means of lying wonders beguiled this simple-minded people. Beholding Philip's miracles, he professed faith in his teaching, and received baptism at his hands. But his faith was not genuine; and probably he hoped by means of baptism to become possessed of the miraculous power with which Philip was endowed. Many of the Samaritans joyfully embraced the faith of Christ, and were baptized; and when the apostles heard this they sent St. Peter and St. John to confirm the converts and to give them their apostolic sanction if they proved to be true disciples, for otherwise a schismatic Judaism might be succeeded by an equally spurious Christianity.

The apostles, finding that they could put their seal on

Philip's work, prayed for his converts that they might receive the Holy Ghost, and confirmed them, and strengthened them in the faith by laying their hands on those whom Philip had already baptized.\* But when Simon Magus saw by some visible signs that by laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given them, he offered them money for the bestowal of the same power upon himself—that on whomsoever he laid his hands he might receive the Holy Ghost. But St. Peter, shocked at the blasphemy, exclaimed, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for *thy heart is not right in the sight of God.*"



DAMASCUS.

Yet he left him not without hope that if he truly repented of his sin and prayed earnestly for pardon, the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.† After leaving Samaria Philip's next convert was the "Ethiopian eunuch," an officer of great authority at the court of Candace, "Queen of the Ethiopians."‡

\* The apostolic custom mentioned here (as well as xix. 6 and Heb. vi. 2) is the origin of our rite of confirming in youth those who were baptized in infancy. It is a following of apostolic example.

† Simon Magus is said to have originated the Gnostic heresy—a rationalising sect which united Eastern philosophy with a spurious Christianity.

‡ Queen of the kingdom of Meröe on the Upper Nile. "Candace" is not the name of any particular queen, but of a dynasty.



He was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, if not an Ethiopian Jew, and we see him engaged in the study of the Jewish Scriptures as he journeyed homewards from Jerusalem, whither he had been to worship. His heart was guileless, teachable, and sincere (the very opposite of Simon Magus), so that when Philip "preached unto him Jesus" he eagerly desired to be baptized into Christ's spiritual kingdom; and in answer to Philip's question whether he believed with all his heart, he answered with genuine earnestness, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Meanwhile the chief persecutor of the Christians at Jerusalem was a learned and patriotic Jew named Saul, who had taken an active part in the martyrdom of St. Stephen. He was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, and his zeal for the religion of his fathers led him to persecute with unrelenting hatred the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, whom he regarded with detestation as an impostor who had justly suffered the punishment of crimes. Not content with threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord in Jerusalem, he persecuted them even unto strange cities, and having obtained letters of authority from the chief priest (who, by permission of the Roman Emperor, exercised a jurisdiction over the Jews in foreign cities), he set out for the ancient city of Damascus to arrest and to bring bound to Jerusalem any of his countrymen he could find there who belonged to what he regarded as the detestable sect of the Nazarenes. But as he journeyed thither, and had come very near the gates of the city, suddenly a light far brighter than the mid-day sun flashed out of the heavens above him, and a voice, louder and more awful than the pealing thunder, called to him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And he, still lying on the ground, to which he had fallen in his terror, answered, "Who art Thou, Lord?" But what was his amazement when he heard the words, so full of reproach and pathos, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest!" Humbled already, he placed himself at the disposal of that very Jesus whose name he had striven to compel His followers to blaspheme, and inquired, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And Jesus, once more speaking to him, gave him comfort and said, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Then Saul arose from the ground, and they led him to Damascus, for he had been blinded by the exceeding brightness of his glorified Lord, who had thus manifested His power and majesty to the man who had persecuted Him in persecuting His disciples.

When Saul had passed three days in fasting and prayer, a certain disciple, Ananias, went to him, and told him how Jesus

had sent him to him that he (Saul) might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. So he arose and was baptized, and forthwith (after his sojourn in Arabia) preached the faith that once he destroyed. But the unbelieving Jews of Damascus were filled with indignation, and they set a military watch at the gates of the city day and night, that they might take him and kill him. But he by the help of the disciples (who let him down in a basket from a window in a house on or overhanging the city wall) escaped from Damascus.



SAUL ESCAPING FROM DAMASCUS.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON III.

- Question.* What followed the martyrdom of St. Stephen?  
*Q.* And what was the consequence?  
*Q.* What people listened eagerly to the preaching of Philip the deacon?  
*Q.* When the apostles heard of the conversion of many of the Samaritans what did they do?  
*Q.* Did Simon Magus, a magician, who was practising his unlawful arts amongst the Samaritans, become a true convert to Christianity?  
*Q.* What man was an exact opposite of Simon Magus?  
*Q.* Who was the chief persecutor of the disciples of Christ at Jerusalem?  
*Q.* What happened to Saul as he was on his way to Damascus, whither he was going to arrest all the disciples of Jesus in that city that he might bring them bound to Jerusalem?  
*Q.* What effect did the vision of Jesus Christ in glory and His words of reproof have on Saul?

## LESSON IV.

Time of peace—St. Peter's miracles of healing—Cornelius—St. Peter's vision—St. Peter visits Cornelius, and baptizes him and other Gentiles—The Church of Antioch—Persecution of King Herod Agrippa I.—Martyrdom of St. James—Deliverance of St. Peter.

*Read Acts ix. 31—xii. 23.*

IT had not yet been made clear to the apostles that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs with the Jews, and that in Christ Jesus there was to be neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, bond or free, Jew or Gentile, but that all were to be one body in Christ. Samaritans and proselytes had indeed been caught in the Gospel net and baptized into Christ's spiritual kingdom; but to throw the gates of that kingdom wide open to the uncircumcised—to Gentiles who had not first become proselytes to the Jewish religion—would never have been done by apostolic sanction had not such scruples been swept away by a special revelation of Christ's will, and by the conversion of great numbers of Gentiles (who were not proselytes) to the faith of Christ. All this came to pass in a remarkable manner.

(1) A Roman officer, Cornelius—centurion of the Italian band\*—was received into the Church by a special revelation of God. In a vision he was commanded to send for the apostle Peter, who should instruct him in God's will. St. Peter, too, had been warned by a vision† (in which the uncircumcised Gentiles were represented by animals that were regarded by the Jews as unclean and unfit for food, but which St. Peter was told no longer to call so, and no longer to refuse) that nothing was common or unclean that God had cleansed. Moreover, when the messengers of Cornelius came to him with their request, the Spirit bade him go with them, nothing doubting; and even while he talked with Cornelius and his friends the Holy Ghost fell upon them, so that he exclaimed, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

(2) Jerusalem, too, was no longer to continue the only centre of apostolic teaching, for now (A.D. 40) the celebrated Syrian city, Antioch, became the most important place, next to Jerusalem, in the early history of Christianity, and the centre of the apostolic missions to the Gentile world. At Antioch, at the preaching of Christian evangelists, great numbers of Gentiles ‡

\* A body of troops raised in Italy, but still located at Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Judæa.

† See Acts x. 9—16.

‡ Greeks, and not Grecians, according to the oldest MSS., and in the opinion of critics.

"believed and turned unto the Lord," and a Church arose composed chiefly of Gentile Christians. But as in the case of the Samaritans, the apostles, believing that Christ's will would be ascertained by the nature of the work, sent Barnabas to Antioch to test it, "who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad," and exhorted the converts "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord"; and he fetched Saul from Tarsus to help in his work of instruction.

In the persecution that followed the death of Stephen the apostles stayed at Jerusalem, though very many of the disciples sought safety in flight; but as time went on it was God's purpose that the apostles likewise should be scattered, and He overruled the malice of their enemies to accomplish what had become necessary for the good of His Church. In the year A.D. 41 Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod "the Great," became King of Judæa by favour of the Roman Emperor Claudius, and (having previously been made ruler of the tetrarchies of his uncles Antipas and Philip by Caligula) he now reigned over all the territories possessed by Herod the Great.

He became the first royal persecutor of the Church; for, to please his subjects, he killed St. James the son of Zebedee, and imprisoned St. Peter with the intention of putting him to death. But when the feast of the Passover was nearly over, and the time had all but come when the great apostle would be sacrificed to the popular hatred of the Christians, the prayers of the Church were answered by his miraculous deliverance. An angel of the Lord brought him out of the prison, the guards sleeping the while, and the great iron door opening for his exit of its own accord; the angel left him not till, past all danger, he stood free and unfettered in the familiar streets of Jerusalem, to seek his friends, who were still with one accord praying for him.

But Herod did not escape the judgment of God, for soon after, when his pride and profanity reached its height, the people saluted him as a god in the theatre of Cæsarea, and he accepted their worship. Then the angel of God smote him, and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost\* (A.D. 44).

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON IV.

*Question.* Did Christ intend that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with the Jews, and that all who believed and were baptized should be admitted to the Church?

*Q.* How was this made plain to the apostles?

*Q.* Did anything occur at Antioch to confirm the free admission of the Gentiles into the Church?

\* Acts xii. 20—23.

Q. Who did Barnabas fetch to help him in the work of instruction at Antioch?

Q. What by-and-by happened to the Church of Jerusalem?

Q. What was the particular effect of this persecution?

Q. Are we told anything about God's judgment on Herod Agrippa?

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## LESSON V.

Saul and Barnabas consecrated and sent forth as missionaries by the Church of Antioch—St. Paul's first missionary journey—The Judaisers—First Council of the Church at Jerusalem, A.D. 50.

*Read Acts xiii.—xv. 35.*

THE Church of Antioch, which was made up chiefly of Gentile Christians, would naturally be more zealous for the conversion of the Gentile world than a Jewish Church like the Church at Jerusalem. And this is what really happened. The Christians who belonged to this Church were fasting and praying, and seeking to know the will of God in this matter, when the Holy Ghost (speaking doubtless by one of the prophets who were inspired to declare the mind of Christ) said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Then they were consecrated to be apostles and missionaries by the laying on of hands. Thus Barnabas and Saul became the first Christian missionaries. Crossing over to the island of Cyprus (accompanied by John Mark, a kinsman of Barnabas, who was to minister to them), they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews at Salamis; and by-and-by they came to Paphos, on the eastern side of the island, and the capital and the residence of the Roman pro-consul, Sergius Paulus. He was a seeker after truth, and he desired to hear the Word of God. Then Elymas, a sorcerer, tried to turn away the governor from the faith; but God so ordered it that this very opposition was productive of good—helping instead of hindering the work of God's minister—for Saul (who from this time was called by his Roman name of Paul) reproved this man (who was at that time the instrument of the wicked one), and calling down on him God's judgment, there fell on him a mist and a darkness, so that he could no longer find his way without some one to lead him by the hand; he was blind for a season. This visible and undeniable token of God's power, and the authority of the apostles, convinced the governor that they were indeed God's ministers, and he believed. Nor was the punishment, we may hope, without a beneficial effect upon Elymas; for according to a tradition of a later time he repented, and was truly converted to the faith. From Paphos the apostles crossed over to the mainland of

Asia Minor to Perga in Pamphylia, and at this place John deserted from the enterprise, and for some reason not mentioned (and about which we can only make guesses) he returned to Jerusalem. Nothing daunted, however, Paul and Barnabas, journeying on one hundred miles over a wild and mountainous country, came to Antioch in Pisidia, and preached in the synagogue of the Jews the glad tidings of the fulfilment of God's Messianic promises in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many of the Jews and proselytes believed the things spoken by Paul and Barnabas, and the



ELYMAS STRICKEN WITH BLINDNESS.

apostles exhorted them to continue in the grace of God. The next Sabbath day almost all the people of the city crowded to the synagogue to hear the Word of God; but when the unbelieving Jews saw so many of the Gentiles in the synagogue, and that the salvation that is by Christ Jesus was as freely offered to them as to the Jews, all their national exclusiveness and jealousy of foreigners was aroused, and "they spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." So Paul and Barnabas, after a solemn warning to their angry countrymen, turned to the Gentiles,

"who were glad, and glorified God." But soon the hatred of the Jews broke out into open persecution, and they expelled the apostles from the city ; but the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost. Then Paul and Barnabas, shaking off the dust from their feet, as a testimony against their persecutors, went on sixty miles to Iconium, and there also preached in the synagogue of the Jews. Here again the same thing happened. Many believed, both Jews and Gentiles ; but the pride and obstinacy of the unbelieving Jews made them act in the same way as their brethren at Antioch. They persecuted the apostles, and with the rulers or magistrates sought to stone them, although very many of the people of the city took part with Paul and Barnabas. Again they passed on to other places, and at Lystra and Derbe, in the hill country of Lycaonia, they preached Christ to a primitive and a heathen people.

At Lystra, when the people beheld St. Paul's miracle of healing (a man who had been a cripple from the hour of his birth), they took the apostles for gods (Barnabas they called Jupiter and Paul Mercury, because he was the chief speaker), and would have worshipped them ; but the ministers of Christ reproved them, saying, "Sirs, why do ye these things ? We are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and all things that are therein ;" and they could scarce restrain the people from sacrificing to them. But in a little while their disappointment made them listen the more readily to the unbelieving and malicious Jews of Antioch and Iconium, who, not content with ill-treating the apostles in those cities, followed them hither and spoke evil of them to the men of Lystra, who ill-treated and stoned the very men whom but an hour before they would have worshipped. St. Paul they cast out of the town and left him for dead ; but even while the sorrowing disciples gazed upon him, Jesus raised him up, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. Here, too, they preached the Gospel, and then returning to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, they exhorted the disciples in these places to continue in the faith, and to remember that through much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God. In every church they ordained ministers, and with prayer and fasting commended them to the Lord. And so, still preaching the Word, they passed through Pisidia and Pamphylia to Perga and Attalia, whence they sailed to Antioch in Syria, the place from which they had started on this their first missionary tour.

At this time certain men, called Judaisers, troubled the

Church, and set at naught the teaching of the Apostle Paul, who had said plainly, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." They insisted that the Gentile Christians should observe the whole ceremonial law of Moses, and especially circumcision; whereas St. Paul declared the entire freedom of Gentile Christians from Mosaic ordinances. It was very necessary that they should be silenced, for their principles would have been a stumbling-block to the Gentiles and all true Christianity. So the Gentile Church of Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to advocate their cause with the mother Church of Jerusalem. Then the apostles and elders and brethren met to consider and decide upon this important matter. This was the First Council of the Church (A.D. 50), and the assembled Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, discerning between good and evil, truth and falsehood, decided against the Judaisers, and wrote an apostolic letter to the Churches confirming the Gentile Christians in their Christian liberty, and affirming salvation to be by Christ alone. This letter brought great joy and consolation to the Gentile Christians. The Gospel had free course, and was zealously preached not only by Paul, Barnabas, and Silas, but by many others.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON V.

*Question.* Have you anything particular to relate concerning the Church of Antioch?

*Q.* Who were the first missionaries to the Gentiles?

*Q.* What country did they visit first?

*Q.* What notable person gave heed to the teaching of the apostles?

*Q.* Who tried to turn him away from the faith, and what was the consequence?

*Q.* Where next did Saul (now called Paul) and Barnabas preach the Gospel, and with what success?

*Q.* Can you tell me anything that happened to them at other places?

*Q.* After their return to Antioch who disturbed the peace of that Church?

*Q.* What was the consequence?

#### LESSON VI.

St. Paul's second missionary tour—Contention and separation between Paul and Barnabas—St. Paul, choosing Silas as his companion, set out to revisit the Churches—He passes over into Europe, and founds Churches in Philippi and in other cities—Persecution at Philippi.

*Read Acts xv. 36—41, xvi.*

AFTER the First Council of the Church at which the freedom of the Gentile Christians from the bondage of Jewish ceremonial law and observances was affirmed, Paul and Barnabas laboured,



we are told, in the Church at Antioch; but after guarding its liberty for a time, and strengthening it by "teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord," St. Paul longed to be engaged once more in his own special and distinctive work as the Apostle of the Gentiles. He wished much to see again his beloved converts, and to revisit the Churches that he and Barnabas had planted in Europe and in Asia. Barnabas needed no persuasion. He seems at once to have acquiesced in the proposal; and "determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia" (Perga in Pamphylia), "and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other; Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus."\* Of their missionary tour we have no account; but "Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches." Even this sharp contention between the apostles we may believe to have been overruled by God for good, for some suppose that Barnabas was not wholly emancipated from his Jewish prejudices, and would have hesitated "to commit himself to the bold course which St. Paul followed without hesitation or misgiving." In this journey St. Paul's purpose was mainly to go over old ground; but this time, instead of going by way of Cyprus—where he might have interfered with the mission of Barnabas—he went first through Cilicia, and by way of the passes of Mount Taurus to Derbe and Lystra. At Lystra St. Paul met with a faithful helper in the youthful Timothy; and because his mother was a Jewess he circumcised him, that he might be acceptable to the Jews; thus showing that in things indifferent he was ready to do everything for the sake of peace and unity.

Journeying onwards as the Spirit led them (they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia†), they came to Troas, where Jesus showed them (by the vision of a man of Macedonia, saying, "Come over and help us") that they were to pass over into Europe. Taking ship at Troas, they crossed the narrow strait that here separates the two continents, and landing at the Macedonian harbour of Neapolis, a journey of twelve miles brought them to Philippi,‡ and in

\* Acts xv. 36—41.

† That part of Western Asia Minor which included the provinces of Myra, Caria, and Lydia.

‡ A Roman colony, and memorable for the great battle fought there (B.C. 42), in which Antony and Octavianus defeated the republicans under Brutus and Cassius.

the Jewish house of prayer, outside the walls of the city by the river side (for here we may suppose, from the smallness of their number, the Jews had no regular synagogue), St. Paul preached to his countrymen. Lydia of Thyatira attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul, and she and her household were baptized. Soon, however, Paul and Silas encountered persecution and suffering for Christ, for St. Paul, delivering a slave girl from the worst bondage of slavery to the wicked one by casting out of her the spirit of divination, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying, incurred their anger as the



"DO THYSELF NO HARM."

spoil of their trade. They brought the apostles before the magistrates, and accused them wrongfully. "These men being Jews," they said, "do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans." And the magistrates, already prejudiced against them as Jews and suspicious persons, and without taking the trouble to make any further investigation, ordered Paul and Silas to be imprisoned and beaten. But after they had been beaten with many stripes, and their feet made fast in the stocks in the foul inner prison, they "sang praises unto God,

and the prisoners heard them." Nor was God unmindful of His servants. An earthquake freed them from their chains and opened the prison doors, and when the jailer would have killed himself, supposing the prisoners to have escaped, the man whose feet he had made fast in the stocks but an hour before stayed his hand, and showed him how a Christian could forgive. Convinced that Paul and Silas were indeed the servants of the Most High God, who showed unto men the way of salvation, and awakened to a consciousness of his sinfulness and misery, he tremblingly demanded what he must do to be saved. And he received the comforting assurance, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Moreover, Paul and Silas instructed him, and baptized both him and his household, while he testified his gratitude and penitence by taking them to his house and feeding them. In the morning the magistrates gave orders that Paul and Silas should be released and sent away in haste; but St. Paul now maintaining his rights as a Roman citizen, made answer, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out." Then the magistrates, trembling for their own safety (for the scourging of a Roman citizen was a crime punishable with death), came and besought them, and brought them out, thus publicly acknowledging their error and the innocence of the men they had maltreated; nor was this a mere personal matter, but one of importance to the furtherance of the Gospel and the safety of the little Church now planted in the city of Philippi.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VI.

*Question.* After labouring for some time in the Church at Antioch what did St. Paul resolve to do?

*Q.* Did Barnabas go with St. Paul on his second missionary journey?

*Q.* Did St. Paul and his companion Silas preach the Gospel in Asia only?

*Q.* What happened to Paul and Silas at Philippi?

#### LESSON VII.

Paul and Silas at Thessalonica and Berea.

*Read Acts xvii. 1—14.*

LEAVING the infant Church of Philippi to the care of Luke and Timothy, Paul and Silas went on to Thessalonica (the modern Salonica), a town at the upper extremity of the Thermaic Gulf, and the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. For several reasons it would be regarded by the great missionary of

the Gentiles as a place in which, with God's help, he must plant a Christian Church. As a great commercial centre, ships were coming and going continually, and these would carry the seed of the Gospel into many lands. Its manufacturing population possessed, it is likely, that thoughtful habit of mind so often seen in those engaged in sedentary employments, and St. Paul's own trade—the manufacture of goats' hair cloth—would bring him into close sympathy with people of the same craft. Then, at Thessalonica there were many Jews, and though they so often regarded Christianity with bitter hatred, yet their religious ideas prepared the Gentile mind for its higher teaching. St. Paul's stay at Thessalonica did not exceed three weeks ("three Sabbath days"), and it was, perhaps, less; but his success was great. As was his custom, he preached Christ to the Jews, first proving to them that Jesus was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, and that in His sufferings, death, and resurrection, He had fulfilled the predictions of the prophets, and accomplished the redemption of the world. Some of them believed, and of the devout Greeks (Gentile worshippers or proselytes) a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few; but the unbelieving Jews, who refused themselves to enter Christ's Church, were envious that the Gentiles should be admitted into it, and, pressing into their service the idle and profane, attacked the house of Jason, where Paul and Silas were staying, intending to seize them; but not finding them, they took Jason and other friends of the apostles, and accused them before the rulers of the city of harbouring men who had proved troublesome in other cities, and now in Thessalonica were teaching questionable and even treasonable doctrines. The city magistrates (politarchs, or magistrates of a free city\*) more just than the rulers of Philippi, and knowing that the Jews had accused their countrymen maliciously, took bail or security of Jason and of others for the good behaviour of the strangers, and let them go. Next at Berea, another town of Macedonia, Paul and Silas preached Christ in the synagogue of the Jews. And these more noble (more liberal and generous) than the Jews of Thessalonica, searched the Scriptures daily, giving up their trades and occupations to discover the truth. And thus seeking, they found the pearl of great price, even Jesus, for many of them believed, and not the Jews only, but many of the Gentiles, both men and women. Then, as at other times, the unbelieving Jews in the last city visited by the Christian teachers, followed them with their malicious stories, and, coming to Berea, stirred up the people against them. So the brethren

\* A city allowed to retain local self-government. No Roman magistrate had jurisdiction over it.

conducted Paul as far as the coast, and the apostle taking ship went on by sea to Athens, which he would reach in about three days ; but Silas and Timotheus remained for a time at Berea.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VII.

*Question.* To what place did Paul and Silas go on leaving Philippi, and to whom did they leave the care of the Church of Philippi ?

*Q.* Why would St. Paul consider Thessalonica a very important place in which to plant a Christian Church ?

*Q.* How long did Paul and Silas stay at Thessalonica, and what was their success ?

*Q.* Did Paul and Silas meet with any opposition at Philippi ?

*Q.* Where next did Paul and Silas preach Christ, and how was their message received ?

### LESSON VIII.

St. Paul at Athens—His speech to the Athenians, and its result.

*Read Acts xvii. 15—34.*

AT Thessalonica St. Paul would gaze upon the mighty Olympus, the abode (as it was reckoned) of the gods ; but in the exquisitely fashioned statues of Athens\* he might almost be said to have beheld the gods themselves, whose empire he came to destroy ; and he was brought into direct hostility with Art, which, however beautiful, was too often a foe to sound morality. The Greek religion was a personification and deification of the powers and processes of nature, or of abstract ideas. Its myths were poetically beautiful, but they possessed no moral power or teaching. Zeus—Zeus most glorious, the “high thunderer,” the “cloud driver,” and originally the personification of the Air—was the god who approached most nearly to an omnipotent being, but he was “a bad example of morals, a one-sided governor of mankind, and ever weak and changeful of intention.” And Phœbus Apollo, the sun god—the god of mirth and gladness—was the embodiment of a glorious natural power, not of a moral influence. Athene, indeed, was the personification of a moral attribute—the Spirit of Wisdom—and “the highest creation of the Greek religious spirit” ; but her influence was rather intellectual than moral, and her character was defective. On the other hand, Aphrodité (Venus) and Dionysus (Bacchus), were immoral deities, and their worship was, in fact, the deification of vice. Such was heathenism at its best ; and the idea of the Supreme, Omnipotent, and Omniscient God of infinite wisdom and love was altogether wanting.

The Athenians themselves were frivolous, vain-glorious, and

\* Greece Proper had become the Roman province of Achaia.

corrupt. Some of them clung to the superstitions and immoralities of their religion, but the more philosophical portion of them regarded the gods of their country with contempt. Little wonder was it that when the earnest Hebrew teacher, the bearer of such glad tidings of salvation to all who would receive them, saw the city thus given up to idolatry, and the people at best to intellectual trifling—spending their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing—he could wait no longer for Silas and Timothy; his spirit was stirred within him. Therefore, at once, without further delay, he began his work, disputing in the synagogue of the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the agora, or market-place, daily with them that met him. Perhaps his



ATHENS.

earnestness and sincerity, making up for the absence of “enticing words” of man’s wisdom, excited the curiosity of his hearers. And so they brought him to the Areopagus, or Mars’ Hill, a rocky platform, on which the most solemn court of Athenian judicature held its sittings under the open sky. Here, surrounded by all that was beautiful in art—statues and temples such as could be seen nowhere else in the whole world—St. Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection to the philosophers and poets and intellectual disputers of Greece; but first of all he insisted on the unity of God, the spiritual nature of the Godhead, the brotherhood of mankind, man’s sinfulness, and need of repentance. “Ye men of Athens,” he

said, "I regard you as in all respects too prone to the worship of gods. For as I passed by and examined the gods of your worship, I found also an altar on which had been inscribed, 'To an unknown God.' Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that He is the Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything; seeing He Himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and made of one blood every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth; determining the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us. For in Him we live, and



AREOPAGUS.

move, and have our being, as certain of your own poets have said, For we are His offspring.\* Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. God then overlooking the times of ignorance, now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He ordained, giving to all men an assurance by raising Him from the dead."

\* "He animates the most crowded way,  
The restless ocean, and the sheltered bay;  
Doth care perplex? is lowering danger nigh?  
We are his offspring, and to Jove we fly."

ARATUS, translated by Lewin.

St. Paul's speech, of which this seems to be a brief summary, was cut short by the derisive shouts of those who were listening to him, when they heard of the resurrection of the dead. But though some mocked, and others said, "We will hear thee again of this matter," "certain men clave to him and believed," among whom was Dionysius, one of the judges of the Areopagus, and "a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON VIII.

*Question.* Can you tell me anything about the religion of the Greeks?

*Q.* What was the character of the people of Athens?

*Q.* Were they sincere believers in their religion?

*Q.* What effect had the idolatry of Athens on St. Paul?

*Q.* At what place did he make his chief speech, and preach Christ and the resurrection to the chief men of Athens?

*Q.* Have we any account of his speech?

*Q.* Was his preaching without any effect whatever?

### LESSON IX.

St. Paul at Corinth—Results of his mission—Writes his Epistles to the Thessalonians.

*Read Acts xviii.*

In the time of St. Paul the Romans had conquered most of the countries of the civilised world, which then (according to the way in which they were governed) bore the name either of Imperial or Senatorial provinces of the Roman Empire. An Imperial province was governed by a representative of the emperor—a military governor—called in Latin a *Legatus* (or in Greek, *Presbeutes*, Prefect), and under him were procurators or governors of subordinate imperial provinces or districts. Syria was an imperial province; Judæa was a sub-imperial province; but its procurator, though subject to the prefect of Syria, had the higher powers of a legatus.

The senatorial provinces were under civil governors appointed by the Senate, called proconsuls. In the time of which we write, Achaia (Greece Proper), Macedonia, Asia, and Crete were examples of senatorial provinces. Some of the cities visited by St. Paul were free, and others were Roman colonies. Free cities, such as Athens and Thessalonica, chose their own magistrates, and possessed local self-government. The colonia, or Roman colony, was governed by Roman magistrates, and garrisoned by Roman soldiers. Philippi in Macedonia, and Corinth in Greece, were Roman colonies. So, in going from Philippi to Thessalonica, St. Paul exchanged a colonia for a



free city; but now he left the free city, Athens, behind him, and took up his abode again in the once famous Corinth, now a colony of Rome. And the contrast between the two cities was great in other ways. Athens was the seat of learning, art, and intellect—the studious university city—the headquarters of orators, poets, and philosophers. Corinth was the capital of the province of Achaia, and the residence of the Roman proconsul; but it was likewise a place of renown as a great commercial centre. The difference between Athens and Corinth in St. Paul's time was as great as between Oxford and Liverpool or London in our own. Many reasons would attract St. Paul to Corinth. As a great trading place it surpassed Thessalonica.



CORINTH AND CENCHREA.

Its eastern port (six miles across the isthmus) was Cenchrea; and on the other side, the harbour of Lechæum commanded the markets of the west; while more Jews were settled in it than in any other town in Greece. But the Corinth of St. Paul was not the Corinth that was so famous when Greece was in all her glory. That city had perished 200 years before the time of the apostle, and the Corinth of his day was a half-Roman city, and the capital of a Roman province. Its buildings, its luxury, its daily life, were all Roman; and this mixture of Greek and Roman civilisation, developing the worst side of both, had only increased its ancient repute for luxury and licentiousness.

Here, arriving at Corinth late in the year A.D. 52, St. Paul found a congenial home with a fellow-countryman, Aquila, who with his wife, Priscilla, was a refugee from Rome, and their trade being the same, Aquila and his guest worked at it together ; for, as at Thessalonica, the apostle (while claiming as a principle the right of those who preach the Gospel to live by the Gospel, or, in other words, the duty of Christians to support those who minister to them in holy things) laboured night and day that he might be chargeable to no man. But when the Sabbath of rest came round St. Paul was found in the synagogue of the Jews, persuading both Jews and Gentiles that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah and the Saviour of the world. And while thus engaged he was greatly cheered by the arrival of Timotheus and Silas from Macedonia with good accounts of his Thessalonian converts.

St. Paul, as we have seen, left Silas and Timotheus at Berea when he departed hastily for Athens, and while at Athens he seems to have sent Timothy back to Thessalonica, and the reason for this his epistle tells us : " When I could no longer forbear " (he wrote to them) " I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. But when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith . . . we were comforted,"\* " pressed in the spirit,"† encouraged to new exertion, and filled with increased zeal and energy.

The usual jealousy and turbulence of the unbelieving Jews were soon manifested at Corinth as conspicuously as they had been, not only in the Greek provincial towns, but even in Rome itself ; for as the apostle reasoned in the synagogue, and testified that Jesus was Christ, the Jews " opposed themselves and blasphemed." So, at length compelled to withdraw from them, he shook his raiment, and said to them, " Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean." Thus he warned them that their unbelief was their destruction—their own act, not his, he was innocent of it. But Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed with all his house, and these, with many of the Corinthians, were baptized ; and the Christians of Corinth, no longer attending the service of the synagogue, assembled for worship in the house of Justus, a Gentile proselyte. And St. Paul was comforted in his hour of trial, for in a vision Jesus Himself assured him of safety, and that He would be with him. This encouraged him to speak boldly, and to deliver his message without fear. Nor was it long before the apostle had a proof of his Lord's watchful care over him ; for when the Jews accused him to Gallio, the new proconsul of Achaia, of

\* 1 Thess. iii. 5—7.

† Acts xviii. 5.

violating the freedom of worship granted by the Roman government to the Jews, he did not even call upon the apostle to defend himself from so frivolous a charge, and, refusing to be an interpreter of Jewish laws and customs, he dismissed the discomfited Jews with contempt. Nor was this all, for the Greeks proceeded to an act of summary punishment upon Sosthenes, who seems to have succeeded Crispus as chief ruler of the synagogue. Thus St. Paul was benefited by the malice of his countrymen, and he was enabled to continue his ministry without fear for himself, or danger to the public peace. Nor were his labours in vain, for during this his first stay in Corinth he founded not only a flourishing Church there, but likewise in other places in the neighbourhood. At Corinth, too, he began his famous Epistles to the Churches by writing his first and second Epistles to the Thessalonians.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON IX.

*Question.* What people had conquered most of the countries of the civilised world in the time of St. Paul?

*Q.* And what had these countries become?

*Q.* How many kinds of provinces were there, and how were they governed?

*Q.* Was there any distinction between the cities within the Roman empire visited by St. Paul?

*Q.* Where did St. Paul go on leaving Athens, and what was his success there?

*Q.* Can you tell me how long St. Paul stayed at Corinth, and anything about his life there?

*Q.* Had Jesus given His servant any special encouragement and promise of help at Corinth?

### LESSON X.

St. Paul's third missionary tour—St. Paul at Ephesus.

*Read Acts xix.*

THE Church of Corinth had become a light shining in a dark place, and a centre from which that light might be radiated to other parts and carried to distant lands; and after fully a year and a half spent in this field of labour, St. Paul felt that he could leave others in charge of it while he proceeded with his own special work of penetrating the strongholds of Satan and planting Christian churches in countries that had never heard of the salvation of Christ. So in the spring of A.D. 54, he sailed with his friends Aquila and Priscilla to Ephesus; but this could only be a passing visit, for he was on his way to the Holy City, there to keep the feast of Pentecost, and to fulfil, it

is likely, his vow made at Cenchrea\* in consequence of a providential deliverance from danger of some kind, and which could only be paid at Jerusalem. So after one emphatic setting forth of Jesus in the synagogue as the long-expected Christ, and promising, at the request of his countrymen, soon to return to them and continue his labours, he hastened on his way, and after some three or four months passed in Syria, at Antioch and Jerusalem, and in "strengthening the disciples of Galatia and Phrygia," he returned to Ephesus on his third missionary tour. This city, founded by Greek colonists, and the capital of the Roman consular province of Asia (or Western Asia



EPHESUS.

Minor), was celebrated for its magic and demonology, its exorcists, magicians, as well as other professed wonder workers and dealers in amulets and charms. But more than all, it was remarkable as the centre of heathen worship, and its magnificent Temple of Artemis (the Diana of the Romans) the shrine of a sacred statue—the image that fell down from Jupiter—a barbarous idol of Asiatic origin representing the prolific powers of nature. Aquila and Priscilla and Apollos (who had been instructed by them in the way of the Lord more perfectly) had prepared the way for St. Paul; but only an apostle could bestow those spiritual gifts necessary to the

\* Acts xviii. 18, 19.

organisation of a Church. So St. Paul proceeded zealously with his work. "There was the constant teaching, publicly and from house to house"; the labours night and day, warning men with tears, and calling them to repentance toward God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ. There was the daily instruction in the facts of the Gospel history, as they had been handed down orally or in writing by those who had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word; the daily labour for daily bread at his calling as a tent maker. St. Paul's first mission preaching was in the synagogue and to the Jews, and for three months he spake boldly, "disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." But the same result followed as in other places. Those who were hardened and believed not stirred up strife, and "the Sabbath services of the synagogue became scenes of confusion and disorder; those who believed were reviled and attacked by their opponents in the presence of the congregation."\* So, failing to win the synagogue, it became necessary to separate from it, and the "school" or lecture-room of Tyrannus became the meeting place of the Christians of Ephesus, and no doubt Christian presbyters were appointed as an immediate consequence. And so for two or three years the work went on, until "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks,"† and "God wrought special miracles"—rather *no common* miracles—"by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."‡ They were more potent than the "Ephesian letters," and they demonstrated to this superstitious people the power of the living and true God. But certain Jewish exorcists, dealers in spells and incantations and mystic names, thought to add to these the sacred name of Jesus, and they tried its power on a demoniac; but he, turning upon them with the cry, "Jesus I recognise, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" and with the strength and fury of madness he stripped them of their clothing and drove them away naked and wounded. Then the necromancers and magicians, conscience-stricken and appalled, and seeking deliverance from the power of the wicked one, burnt their books of occult arts, and their value was reckoned at not less than "fifty thousand pieces of silver.§ Thus a "great door and effectual" was opened to

\* See Prof. Plumptre's "St. Paul in Asia Minor." S.P.C.K.

† Acts xix. 10. ‡ 11, 12.

§ If this piece of silver was the Attic drama (=9½d.), the sum would be £2,031; if the Roman denarius it would be £1,770; but the denarius was the daily wage of unskilled labour.

the apostle ; but at last those whose gains were derived from the popular worship took alarm, and Demetrius the silversmith, who made silver shrines for Diana (portable models of the Temple of Diana), incited his fellow-craftsmen to rise against the teachers who had brought the worship of the goddess into disrepute, by teaching that gods made with hands are no gods. Seizing two of St. Paul's companions they hurried them to the theatre and exposed them to the fury of the people. And it was as much as the chief officer of the city, the town clerk, could do to soothe the passions of the multitude.\*



THE MAGICIANS BURNING THEIR BOOKS.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON X.

*Question.* When did St. Paul leave Corinth ?

*Q.* Can you relate any incidents of St. Paul's work at Ephesus ?

*Q.* Did St. Paul perform any special or *uncommon* miracles at Ephesus ?

*Q.* What attempt did certain Jewish exorcists make to imitate the apostle, and what was the consequence ?

*Q.* What were some of the results of the progress of Christianity in Ephesus ?

\* See Acts xix. 23—41.

## LESSON XI.

St. Paul leaves Ephesus—Continues his third missionary journey—Revisits Greece and the coast of Asia Minor—Returns to Antioch—St. Paul at Cæsarea—He sets out for Jerusalem.

*Read Acts xx.—xxi. 1—15.*

VERY soon after the riot of Demetrius St. Paul set out to revisit the Churches of Macedonia, and to meet Titus, by whom, as some suppose, he had sent his first Epistle to the Church of Corinth, and greatly did he wish to know how his counsels and reproofs had been received by the disciples of that city. "I had no rest in my spirit," he says, "because I found not Titus my brother."\* "When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest; but we were troubled on every side: without were fightings, within were fears."† Thus, while St. Luke's narrative informs us of the outward incidents of the apostle's life, his own epistles speak very clearly of his mental and spiritual conflicts, and how the care of all the Churches weighed him down; and both the Acts, of the Apostles and the Epistles of the great missionary to the Gentiles should be read together if we would gain a real insight into the history of these times. At Philippi Titus joined him with cheering accounts of the Church of Corinth; for the erring members of that Church had repented of their sins and given heed to the warnings of the apostle, and he "was filled with comfort." "God who comforts them that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus."‡ Then St. Paul wrote his second Epistle to the Corinthians, and Titus was again the bearer of it, for false teachers (Antinomian free thinkers) were still amongst them and trying to introduce amongst them their poisonous leaven.

Before following Titus to Corinth, St. Paul visited Illyricum and Northern Greece. His work at Corinth during this his second visit was to restore Church discipline, to root out heresy, to denounce the sins to which it gave rise, and to excommunicate impenitent offenders with all the authority of an apostle. After passing three months in Greece St. Paul set out for Syria by way of Macedonia and Troas, for a plot of the unbelieving Jews prevented his embarkation at Cenchrea. In St. Luke's account of St. Paul's sojourn at Troas we see something of the way in which the first day of the week—the Lord's day, the day of the resurrection—was passed by a Gentile Church. We see how "the disciples came together to break

\* 2 Cor. ii. 13.    † 2 Cor. vii. 5.    ‡ 2 Cor. vii. 6.

bread," and to worship, and to hear preaching; and Justin Martyr, one of the early fathers, says, "On the day called Sunday one common assembly is held, and we read the writings of the apostles, and the books of the prophets"; and he adds that a sermon, breaking of bread (Holy Communion), and a collection of alms for the poor, form a part of the service. In the restoration of Eutychus St. Paul gave proof of his apostolic authority and miraculous power. Touching at Miletus, a port thirty miles from Ephesus, he sent for the presbyters of the Church of that city to come to him, lest in going to them the ship might sail without him; and there on the shore he reminded them of the Gospel he had preached, and they were still to preach to the Church of which they were the ministers—repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. "Bonds and afflictions" he knew awaited him; but he cared not for these things, nor reckoned his life dear unto himself so that he might finish his course with joy. Kneeling down on the sea-shore he prayed with them. "And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him: sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more."

Again on the sea-shore at Tyre he prayed with certain disciples who would have dissuaded him from going up to Jerusalem; but not even the warning of the prophet Agabus at Cæsarea, not the earnest expostulations of his friends there, could alter his purpose. "What," said he, "mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." So certain of the disciples of Cæsarea resolved to accompany him, and taking up their "carriages," that is, things to be carried, they set out for Jerusalem.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XI.

*Question.* Where did St. Paul go soon after leaving Ephesus, and who brought him cheering news?

*Q.* Did St. Paul revisit Corinth himself, and what was his work there?

*Q.* Where did St. Paul go after passing three months in Greece?

*Q.* Can you tell me anything about St. Paul's visit to Troas?

*Q.* In what way did St. Paul give evidence of the miraculous power with which, as an apostle, he was endowed?

*Q.* Can you relate any particulars of St. Paul's journey to Jerusalem?



## LESSON XII.

St. Paul and the Church at Jerusalem—St. Paul in the Temple—The tumult—St. Paul and the Roman commander—St. Paul defends himself and pleads with his countrymen—His defence cut short—St. Paul before the Sanhedrim—The plot—St. Paul before Felix—Felix keeps St. Paul in military custody.

*Read Acts xxi. 17—xxiv. 40,*

THE apostles and all the Church at Jerusalem received St. Paul gladly, and he saluted them and declared unto them what great things God had wrought amongst the Gentiles by his ministry. Nor was any doubt raised about the freedom of the salvation that is by Jesus Christ, for when they heard the apostle's report they glorified God.

But St. Paul's enemies, the Judaisers, were working against him even in Jerusalem, and they spread the report that he taught the Jews to disregard the customs of their fathers and the ordinances of Moses. The doctrine of these pernicious teachers was circumcision and salvation by works, and so they made the cross of Christ of none effect. St. Paul taught that circumcision availed nothing, and that salvation was of free grace—the gift of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

But though a true Christian he was also a faithful Israelite, loyal to his own nation, and contending "for the hope of his fathers," by showing how that hope had been fulfilled in Christ. So to make this evident to the Jewish portion of the Church, and to conciliate by all lawful means those who were prejudiced against him, he readily accepted the counsel of St. James and the elders that he should appear before the priests with the four poor Nazarites, joining them in the ceremonial worship, and paying for their offerings.

Amongst the foreign Jews who had come to Jerusalem at this festal season were some of St. Paul's inveterate enemies, the unbelieving Jews of Ephesus; and when they beheld in the temple him whom they regarded as an apostate and a renegade, and who had desecrated the holy place, as they supposed, by bringing Gentiles into it, they sprang upon him and raised such a tumult that he was only rescued from immediate death by Claudius Lysias, the "chief captain," who commanded the Roman garrison of Fort Antonia. Anxious to clear himself from the accusations of his enemies, he begged Lysias to let him speak to the excited multitude, and then, standing on the steps leading up to Herod's palace, which was now the Prætorium or residence of the Roman governor, he addressed his countrymen in "the Hebrew tongue," or rather in a dialect of the Hebrew—the vernacular Syro-Chaldaic language. But he

cared less to clear himself than to win them. First he would convince them of his own innocence, and then he would appeal to them with all the love and all the earnestness of one whose "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was that they might be saved." So first he spoke of his zeal for his own nation and for the Jewish religion, and how he had persecuted unto the death the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. In a few striking words he told them of his miraculous conversion, and of his baptism; but when he spoke of his commission as the apostle not of the Jews but of the heathen world, and that Christ had said to him, "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles," they were excited to the utmost pitch of fury, and cried out, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." Then the Roman commander, not understanding the language in which St. Paul spoke, and supposing from the violent behaviour of the Jews that he must be some great offender, would have examined him by torture, but desisted as soon as he heard of his Roman citizenship; and on the morrow he sent his prisoner for trial to the Jewish Sanhedrim—the same court that twenty-two years before had sent Stephen to his martyrdom, and had condemned One greater than any martyr or apostle.

Again St. Paul spoke in his defence, and appealed to his countrymen, and especially to the Pharisees—for he saw both Pharisees and Sadducees amongst his judges—and in this way he divided them; the Pharisees taking his part, and the dissension becoming so great that he was rescued from his own countrymen a second time by the Roman soldiers, who took him again into the citadel. That same night Jesus Himself comforted him, saying, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

The Roman commander, being informed on the morrow of a plot against Paul, sent him away by night under a strong guard to Cæsarea, there to be judged by the governor, Felix. The accusers of the apostle must there bring their charges against him before the Roman procurator.

After five days Ananias the high priest, with the elders, and a Roman orator or advocate named Tertullus, came from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, and St. Paul was put upon his defence in the Roman court. The Roman advocate speaking in Latin, and being previously instructed by the Jews, brought three distinct charges against the prisoner: he was a mover of sedition, the ringleader of an heretical sect, and a profaner of the temple. St. Paul declared these imputations to be false; and his accusers, the Jews of Asia, were not there to prove them.

He had caused neither sedition nor riot. He believed the law and the prophets, and the resurrection from the dead ; and as for profaning the temple, he had gone there to worship and to present alms and offerings. A just judge would have acquitted the prisoner at once ; but Felix, under pretence of waiting for the evidence of Lysias, returned no direct answer, but kept Paul in military custody at Cæsarea for two whole years, now and then sending for him and talking with him, and hoping to receive a bribe that he might release him.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XII.

*Question.* How was St. Paul received by the Church of Jerusalem ?

*Q.* What enemies were working against St. Paul even in Jerusalem ? and what report did they spread about him ?

*Q.* What doctrine did the Judaisers teach, and what was the difference between their teaching and the teaching of St. Paul ?

*Q.* What means did St. Paul take by the advice of St. James and the elders to show that he was still a faithful Israelite ?

*Q.* What was the consequence ?

*Q.* When and before whom did he next make his defence ?

*Q.* What was the result ?

*Q.* What became of the apostle after this ?

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### LESSON XIII.

St. Paul before Felix—He appeals to Cæsar—St. Paul before Herod Agrippa II.

*Read Acts xxv., xxvi.*

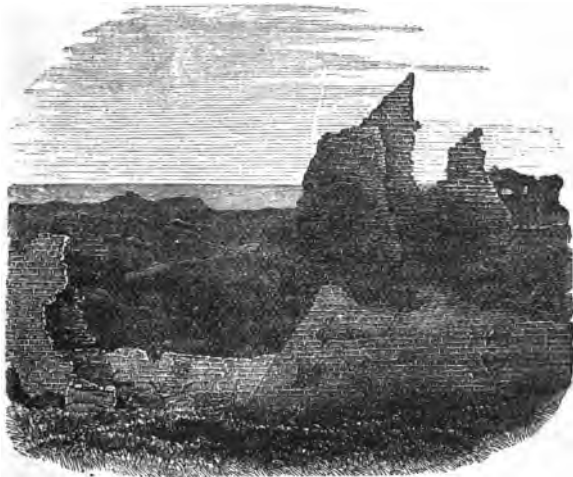
THE profligate, mean, and unprincipled Felix trembled when St. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come ; but ever putting off his repentance to " a more convenient season," his name has become a beacon to warn men off the dangerous rocks of procrastination and delay on which those are too often shipwrecked who slight their opportunities and trifle away their day of grace.

At length, when for about the space of two years the apostle had suffered this unjust captivity, Felix was recalled to Rome to answer for his misrule, which had become notorious ; and to pacify the Jews, whose accusations he feared, he left Paul bound.\*

The Jews petitioned Porcius Festus, who succeeded Felix as Procurator of Judæa, to send St. Paul back to Jerusalem, there

\* In the Roman law there were three kinds of custody, viz.: (1) Confinement in the public gaol ; (2) free custody ; and (3) military custody. The first was the most severe of all ; the second the mildest ; the accused, St. Paul, was placed in military custody, suffering no confinement, but he lived under the surveillance of some responsible person—a senator or magistrate—who was bound to produce him at the time of trial. In military custody, the prisoner was chained to the right hand of a soldier, who was answerable for him with his life.

to be judged ; but their meaning was to assassinate him on the way. Festus was too just a man thus to give up a Roman citizen to be tried by his accusers, and he told them to go down to Cæsarea, whither he himself would shortly return, and there he would judge between them. And this in a few days came to pass. The Jews from Jerusalem laid many grievous complaints against St. Paul, which they were unable to prove. While he showed very clearly that neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar had he offended. But even Festus, though a much better man than Felix, did not take a straightforward course. Willing to do the Jews a pleasure, he would have persuaded his prisoner (as he was charged with offences against the religion of the Jews) to submit to a tribunal



WALL OF CÆSAREA.

or his own countrymen. But St. Paul, refusing to be placed in the power of his enemies, and exercising his right as a Roman citizen, appealed unto Cæsar—to the Supreme Court of Appeal at Rome—the imperial tribunal. Festus found, by conference with his council, that his prisoner's appeal was legal, and that the case was now entirely removed from his own jurisdiction. His prisoner had appealed unto Cæsar, and to Cæsar he must go. But in his ignorance of the customs and religion of the Jews, how should he state the case to the emperor ? So because Festus doubted of such questions (and yet it seemed to him unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to signify the crimes laid against him), he was glad to submit the case to Herod

Agrippa II., King of Chalcis,\* who was his guest. Agrippa had been educated in the religion of the Jews, and was expert in all questions and customs relating to it. So he answered, "I would also hear the man myself"; to which Festus as readily replied, "To-morrow thou shalt hear him."

And on the morrow before King Agrippa he made the last as well as the greatest and most memorable of his speeches. He showed how he had lived a strict Pharisee, and how the Jews accused him not on account of any crime they could prove against him, but for believing that the hope of his nation



ST. PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA AND FESTUS.

—the expectation of a Messiah—had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; and this he witnessed both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come to pass, and how Jesus Himself had appeared to him and convinced him that He was indeed the Christ.

Then appealing to King Agrippa (himself a Jew) as to

\* Son of that King Herod Agrippa I., King of the Jews, whose death (A.D. 44) is mentioned in Acts xii. Chalcis was a principality of Antilibanus.

one who was not ignorant of such matters, who could understand his argument, he pressed it home to him, exclaiming, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." But Agrippa answered mockingly, or scornfully (as is generally supposed), "In a little time" (with a little persuasion) "thou wouldest make me a Christian!" But St. Paul taking it in all seriousness, and appealing once more and in the most solemn manner to all present, he replied, "I would to God" (or I would entreat God) "that" (sooner or later) "not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, may become both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." So ended the interview; and Agrippa's judgment was that St. Paul might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XIII.

*Question.* What happened after St. Paul had been detained two years at Cæsarea?

*Q.* Before whom did St. Paul make his last great speech, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles?

*Q.* Can you tell me something about it?

*Q.* What was King Agrippa's judgment?

### LESSON XIV.

St. Paul's voyage to Rome and shipwreck—St. Paul at Melita—St. Paul's voyage from Melita to Puteoli—Journey to Rome—St. Paul at Rome.

*Read Acts xxvii., xxviii.*

ST. PAUL was now bound for Rome. His Lord's words, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome," were about to be accomplished, and he must have been assured that it was no blind fate or chance stroke of adverse fortune that was carrying him thither, but a thing planned in the councils of infinite wisdom and destined to bring about the most important results.

The account of St. Paul's voyage and shipwreck, as recorded by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles,\* is so vivid, natural, and circumstantial a story that it can only be altered for the worse; and the readers of this manual should turn to it and read it. It carries us back to times long past; and we see portrayed before us the ancient merchantman, clumsy and destitute of fine lines, and all the modern accelerations of speed, with its single mast, enormous yard, and paddle rudders, without compass, or chronometer, or chart, or any one of the appliances of modern navigation.

\* Acts. xxvii., xxviii.

The homeward bound "ship of Adramyttium," a sea-port of Mysia,\* in which St. Paul and his friends, St. Luke the Evangelist and Aristarchus the Macedonian of Thessalonica, embarked (August, A.D. 60), touching at Myra, in Cilicia, Julius the centurion was able to exchange the small coasting vessel which had brought them thus far on their way for a ship of Alexandria carrying corn to Italy. Encountering a terrific north-easter they were driven south towards the African coast, and were in danger of running on the quicksands of the Syrtis—a bay full of shoals between Tunis and Tripoli. A lull in the wind enabled them to prepare the ship for riding out the tempest, which only increased in violence. All hope of being saved was gone, when St. Paul told those who were with him in the vessel to be of good cheer, that no one should be lost, for God had given him the lives of all who sailed with him. And so indeed it happened; for though the ship was wrecked upon the rocks of the island of Melita, or Malta, all the 276 souls that were in her escaped safe to land on boards and on broken pieces of the ship. It was now autumn, and until the return of spring they must remain in the island, weather bound; for in these times navigation was entirely suspended during the winter months. It was not till the spring of the following year, about the middle of February (A.D. 61) that St. Paul and his fellow-voyagers once more set sail in the "Caster and Pollux," another Alexandrian corn ship, which in due time landed them at Puteoli (now called Pozzuoli), in the Bay of Naples. And here, at this great sea-port, the resort of many foreigners, St. Paul found "brethren," and he was allowed to tarry a week with them. Again at Appii Forum, the market place of Appius, about forty-three miles from Rome, and at the Three Taverns (about thirty miles from Rome) on the Appian Way, or great road from Rome to the south of Italy, the apostle found Christian brethren who had come from Rome to meet him. Three years before he had written them his Epistle, but now he met them face to face, and for this he thanked God and "took courage."

In the last few verses of the Acts of the Apostles St. Luke tells us about the arrival of the apostle in Rome, and his mission there. The centurion Julius delivered his prisoners to Burrus, the prefect of the Prætorian guard (the body-guard of the emperor), who allowed St. Paul to dwell in a lodging of his own with the soldier under whose care and custody he was to await his trial. "And it came to pass that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together; and when they

\* A subdivision of the province of Asia. See Note on p. 256.

were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans; who when they had examined me, would have let me go, because they found no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause, therefore, have I called for you to see you, and to speak with you; because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." And they said unto him, "We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren showed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect we know that it is everywhere spoken against." On an appointed day the apostle expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And the usual result followed, "some believed the things that were spoken, and some believed not." Hearing they understood not, and seeing they perceived not. But he warned them that their privileges would be taken away and given to another people, who should come and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while God's people, the Jews, would be cast out. Thus the conference ended, and the Jews departed, but had great reasoning among themselves; but what came of it we know not. For two whole years St. Paul dwelt in his own hired house, receiving all that came to him, and "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him." St. Luke's inspired narrative here comes to an end, so that for an account of the remaining years of St. Paul's life and the progress of Christianity, we must look to other and uncertain sources of information.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XIV.

*Question.* In what ship did St. Paul and his companions, St. Luke and Aristarchus, embark, when they left Cæsarea for Rome?

*Q.* How far did this vessel take them?

*Q.* How did they proceed?

*Q.* Did they meet with a prosperous voyage? and in what island did they winter?

*Q.* When did they proceed on their voyage, and in what ship?

*Q.* What became of St. Paul on his arrival at Rome?

*Q.* How did St. Paul employ his time? and what intercourse did he have with his countrymen at Rome?



## LESSON XV.

St. Paul's first captivity at Rome—Epistles written at this time—Supposed date of release—St. Paul's supposed journeys and visitations.

WE learn from the Acts of the Apostles that the evangelist St. Luke was for many years the friend and companion of St. Paul, accompanying him on his missionary tours, sharing his dangers and privations, staying with him or visiting him during his long imprisonments, and we have the apostle's own testimony in his Second Epistle to Timothy—"Only Luke is with me"—that he was with him and ministered to him, probably at the risk of his own life, during his last rigorous confinement at Rome, and shortly before his martyrdom. Why then St. Luke should have so abruptly broken off his narrative of St. Paul's life and labours before his liberation from his first captivity at Rome is quite unaccountable; but so it is, and from that date we can only gather a few notices and inferences from his own epistles and from the accounts of early ecclesiastical writers.

In the spring of A.D. 63, St. Paul was still the prisoner of Jesus Christ. During the previous year (A.D. 62) he wrote four of his epistles—those to Philemon, to the Colossians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians. His Epistle to the Philippians was the last epistle he wrote during his first captivity at Rome. Luke, Aristarchus, and Demas were his fellow-labourers. Already heresies of Oriental origin were corrupting the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, and St. Paul's epistle contained warnings against the perversion of that Gospel by the Judaising party. "To the Philippians," says a recent writer, "he could speak with satisfaction of the success of the Gospel through his bonds. He could announce his anticipation of approaching trial without alarm; for after reviewing the prospect of life or death before him, and adding that to him 'to live is Christ, and to die is gain,' he adds, with an apparent inward assurance, 'I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith' . . . . 'that your rejoicing may be more abundant by my coming to you again.' Thus it is evident that he reckoned upon an acquittal. The epistle shows, besides, that Christianity had penetrated even into the household of the infamous Nero."

In the absence of all direct evidence to St. Paul's release we may take the indirect testimony of early Christian writers, and of the apostle's own letters, as sufficient warrant for believing that he was set at liberty, "with or without formal trial," some time "after the spring of the year 63, but before the great fire of Rome, and the violent persecution of the Christians which

so soon followed thereupon." Had he been still a prisoner at that time he could not, humanly speaking, have escaped. "Having quitted the city" (before the conflagration) "Paul is supposed to have gone in the first instance to Macedonia in the course of the year 63, and thence to Colossæ, where he had already prepared Philemon to receive him, and in the following year to have accomplished the voyage he had so long meditated into Spain. It may be assumed that if he once reached that remote country he could not fail to make a stay there of some duration; but the Epistles to Timothy and Titus indicate from internal evidence of various kinds that they were written later than this, and that the writer had then visited the east very recently. Accordingly we conclude that St. Paul returned from Spain to Asia; and there seems some reason to believe that he presented himself once more to the churches of Ephesus, Miletus, and Corinth, and even in Crete; that he journeyed into Macedonia, and proceeded to Nicopolis, in Epirus, and there probably made his way finally to Italy and Rome once more," and as these journeys and visitations must have occupied a considerable time, it is believed that he did not return to Rome until after the fire of A.D. 64.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XV.

*Question.* Who was the friend and companion of St. Paul for many years?

*Q.* Do we learn from St. Luke the time and manner of St. Paul's death?

*Q.* What epistles did St. Paul write during his first imprisonment at Rome?

*Q.* What errors were now troubling the Church?

*Q.* Was St. Paul liberated from his first confinement at Rome? and when is he supposed to have been set at liberty?

*Q.* What places and countries is St. Paul supposed to have visited after his liberation?



COINS OF TITUS.

## LESSON XVI.

Great fire at Rome, A.D. 64—Its effect on the progress of Christianity—Persecution of the Christians—St. Paul's second captivity at Rome—Supposed date and place of martyrdom—Martyrdom of St. Peter.

THE terrible fire at Rome in the year A.D. 64 is memorable in the early history of the Church on account of the fierce persecution of the Christians that followed it, and was the result of it, and which was only the precursor of other persecutions as cruel that afflicted the Church for two centuries and a half.

It broke out amongst some houses and shops near the circus on the 19th day of July, A.D. 64, and a high east wind driving the flames, which were at the same time fed by the most combustible materials, they soon came to a head, and swept onwards, unchecked, in the direction of the Roman Forum. The historic temple of Jupiter Stator and many other temples and public buildings, including the imperial palace, were destroyed. For six days the conflagration raged with uncontrollable fury, and then, still insatiable, but changing its direction with a change of wind, for three more days it pursued its scorching track southward, from the Æmilian gardens towards the Quirinal; and well might it seem to the Christians of those days to be the flaming vengeance of the Almighty upon that proud city in which was centred the desperate wickedness of the heathen world. Its master, the infamous Nero, was the greatest patron of its vice; but his "sins against the national prejudices have involved his memory, perhaps, in greater odium among the Romans themselves than the enormities of lust and cruelty which have made his name a byword with Christians and moralists in all ages." He beheld the destruction of Rome from a turret of his palace, "singing and dancing the mime of the 'Burning of Troy' as he watched the progress of the national catastrophe." But indirectly it was favourable to the cause of the Church. It "showed at once the impotence of the old divinities and swept away the familiar monuments of their worship," thus giving "a final blow to the popular faith."

"The burning of Rome," says a learned writer, "inflicted a deep and lasting blow upon the religion of the Romans, and cleared the field, no doubt, for the new developments of spiritual belief which were already impending. The first effect of the crisis was disastrous to the little community of Christian converts; but it became, by God's providence, a means for the ultimate advancement of the faith. It was the first step towards the public recognition and the final acceptance of Christianity."

In the midst of the panic caused by the fire it began to be whispered that Nero himself "had commanded the conflagration in order to clear an ample space for his insane projects"; and that he might be gratified by the grandeur of the spectacle, and so to humour the people, he gave them shelter in the halls and porches of the Campus Martius, besides erecting temporary buildings for their accommodation. He even provided them with furniture, and lowered the price of grain; but all these means failing to soothe their exasperation, he "diverted the odium of the fire from himself to the innocent Christians, and gave them up to the refined and barbarous punishments of that which is called the first Christian persecution." This terrible ordeal has been described by the Roman historian Tacitus. He says, "But neither by human aid, nor by the prince's largesses, nor again by appeal to the divinities, was the common rumour dissipated which insinuated that the conflagration had been commanded. In order to stifle this suspicion, Nero accused and exposed to special torments certain wicked and detestable people who were commonly styled Christians. . . . Some of these people were at once arrested, and on their confession and testimony a great number of others were convicted, not so much on the charge of the burning as of their hatred to mankind in general. These were put to death, and mockery was added to their sufferings; for some were sewn up in beasts' skins and torn in pieces by dogs, others were fastened to crosses and set on fire to give light at night. Nero threw his own gardens open for the spectacle, and held chariot races on the occasion, mingling with the mob in the garb of a driver, or himself driving. Culprits they might be, and worthy of extreme punishments; nevertheless the people could not help pitying them, as condemned for no public advantage, but to gratify the cruelty of a single individual."



COIN OF NERO.

At Rome the Christians were lighting up the gardens of Nero, and before the miserable end of that tyrant, the great apostle had died a martyr's death

Why he was arrested and where we know not. There seems to have been no general persecution of his fellow-believers in the faith, for they were free to go and come, or to bear him company. His confinement, however, was probably more rigorous than on the first occasion. "I am," he said, "ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I

have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." This was written by St. Paul during his second imprisonment, and as the learned suppose, in the spring of the year A.D. 68; and the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul (for the tradition is that both suffered at Rome on the same day) is supposed to have taken place just before the death of the Emperor Nero, which happened on the 9th or the 11th of June of the same year—A.D. 68. St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, was probably killed with the sword—beheaded—at a place called *Aquæ Salvæ* (now Trefontane), on the road to Ostia, some two miles outside the walls of the city. St. Peter, who was not reckoned a Roman citizen, is supposed to have been crucified.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XVI.

*Question.* What memorable event occurred at Rome in the summer of A.D. 64?

*Q.* What were its consequences to the Christians?

*Q.* What does the Roman historian Tacitus say about the sufferings of the Christians?

*Q.* Where was the Apostle St. Paul at this time?

*Q.* Was St. Paul imprisoned at Rome a second time?

*Q.* What epistle did he write during this his last imprisonment?

*Q.* When is St. Paul's martyrdom supposed to have taken place, and what apostle is believed to have suffered on the same day?

*Q.* In what way are these apostles believed to have been put to death?

### LESSON XVII.

St. John at Ephesus—Persecution of the Christians—Secondary causes—Persecution of Domitian, A.D. 95—St. John in Patmos—St. John's death—Organisation and government of the Church—The Apostolic Fathers—Their testimony to episcopacy and apostolic doctrine—The rule of faith.

SOON after the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul the Romans besieged Jerusalem, and St. John took up his abode in Ephesus; and for many years after the death of his brother apostles he watched over the Church, regulated its discipline and worship, organised its form of government, and combated the various heresies that in one shape or another disturbed its peace. But the Church had troubles without as well as within. The persecution of Nero was but the first of a series of persecutions that the kingdom of Satan directed against the kingdom of God; and so fierce and unrelenting and cruel were they, that had not its origin been Divine, and its invisible Head none other than the Son of God, it must have been overthrown. But though the bush burned, it was not consumed. The more Satan's rage was directed against it, the more it grew and spread and brought forth fruit a hundredfold. The gates of hell could not prevail against the Church of God; but a

great "cloud of witnesses" for Christ sealed their testimony with their blood, and were put to death by fire and sword, and bodily tortures too terrible to dwell upon. But though, when traced to its source, we cannot doubt that Satan's enmity was the origin of the hatred that so inflamed both rulers and people against the disciples of Christ, there were secondary causes that contributed to it. Christianity could not be content with the bare toleration that the Romans accorded generally to other religions than their own. It was, and it claimed to be, the only way of salvation, the only ark of safety amid the waves of this evil world. Its glad tidings had penetrated "Cæsar's household," and it drew its proselytes



PATMOS.

from the religion still professed by the ruling people. The Roman emperors claimed divine honours, and the burning a few grains of incense to their honour and to the honour of the heathen deities was a test of loyalty. If the Christian submitted to such a test, he might purchase a few years of safety; but thousands endured the utmost extremity of torture rather than deny their Lord. The persecution of Nero in A.D. 64 was succeeded by that of Domitian in A.D. 95. Irenæus says that St. John was banished to Patmos (an island off the south-western coast of Asia Minor) during the reign of that emperor, and here it was he saw the apocalyptic visions (recorded in the Book of Revelation) which revealed

the Church's future history and made known our Lord's warnings, exhortations, reproofs, and promises to the seven churches of Asia. St. John returned to Ephesus in the reign of the Emperor Nerva. Here he wrote his gospel, and died at a great age about A.D. 100. Before this date the government by the bishops was becoming the rule of the Church; and though the words bishop and presbyter have the same meaning in the New Testament, yet "before the end of the first century in the churches of Antioch and Ephesus, and early in the second century in the Western churches, the Episcopate had come to be a separate order of the ministry." The apostolic fathers, who were personal disciples of St. John, refer very clearly in their writings to this threefold order—bishops, priests, and deacons—which has ever since been the rule of the Church. Thus Polycarp, the first Bishop of Smyrna, speaks of "being subject to the priests and deacons"; and Ignatius makes frequent reference to the same thing. He says: "Let us take heed therefore that we do not set ourselves against the bishop." "Your most worthy bishop, and the well-wrought spiritual crown of your presbyter, and your deacons which are according to God." "Without these there is no Church." "For as many as are of God, and of Jesus Christ, are also with their bishop. . . . Let no one follow him that makes a schism in the Church. . . . For there is but one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup in the unity of His blood, one altar, as also there is one bishop, together with His presbyter, and the deacons, my fellow-servants."

And from these early writers it is evident that the Church had everywhere received from the apostles and their companions the complete and distinct scheme of doctrine, and that this apostolic teaching was everywhere recognised as the unalterable faith of the Church. Polycarp in his epistle to the Philippians (A.D. 107) speaks of "the faith once delivered to the saints" as the guide to the true meaning of Scripture: "Let us return," he says, "unto the Word that from the beginning was delivered unto you." Irenæus wrote to one who had fallen into heresy: "These doctrines are at variance with the doctrine of the Church. These doctrines the elders who were before us, who also conversed with the apostles, did not deliver to thee"; and "the Church, though scattered throughout the world, to the very ends of the earth, having received from the apostles and the disciples the faith which is in God the Father." "It is in the power of all who are willing to hear what is true to see the tradition of the apostles which has been made manifest over the whole world in every church; and we are able to reckon up those who were appointed by the

apostles to be bishops in the churches, and their successors to our time who never thought anything of this kind." Origen (A.D. 204) writes: "The teaching of the Church remains the same, having been handed down from the apostles through an order of succession and continuously even to the present time in the churches. That only is to be believed to be truth which differs in nothing from the ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition." The primitive Church understood Scripture according to the rule of faith and practice which had been inherited from apostolic times; whereas heretics, who professed to abide by the teaching of Scripture, interpreted it according to some superior light of their own.

The apostles were gradually taken away, but the Church was not left without apostolic authority; for Scripture and "the unanimous voice of catholic antiquity" unite in declaring that (with the exception of their miraculous power) the apostles transmitted their authority to the "faithful men—the bishops and pastors of Christ's flock—whom they had ordained," that they "should be able to teach others also." And if they were to act in Christ's name and by His authority they had also Christ's promise for their encouragement, and so long as they were true to Him, they might be assured that He was with them, and would be with them even unto the end.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XVII.

*Question.* When did St. John take up his abode in Ephesus?

*Q.* What were the secondary causes that contributed to the persecution of the Christians?

*Q.* What persecution followed that by Nero, A.D. 64?

*Q.* To what island was St. John banished, and what happened to him there?

*Q.* What had become the established government of the Church before the end of the first century?

*Q.* To what do the writings of the apostolic fathers testify?

*Q.* What besides is evident from early Christian writers?

*Q.* How did the primitive Church understand Scripture?

*Q.* Did the apostles transmit their authority to other men?



COIN OF NERVA.



## LESSON XVIII.

Martyrdom of Ignatius and Polycarp—Universal preaching of the Gospel—*Irenæus*—Justin Martyr—Gnosticism—Christianity in Northern Africa—Tertullian—St. Cyprian—Persecutions of Severus, Decius, and Valerian—Persecution of Diocletian.

HERESY within and persecution without, false friends and open enemies, gave little rest to that kingdom of Christ which, though in the world, was not of it, and which, unlike the kingdoms of this world, was guided by the principles of love to man, and devotion to the one true God. Nero was dead, but his cruelty and persecuting rage lived on in his successors. Domitian (95—96), Trajan (98—117), and then Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (161—180), directed the assaults of Paganism against the city of God, and though it could not be overthrown (for its foundations were laid deep on the Rock of Ages), many of the greatest and noblest of its citizens fell before the fury of the enemy. The apostolic Fathers, Ignatius (second Bishop of Antioch in Syria) and Polycarp (Bishop, first of Smyrna, and then the successor of Ignatius at Antioch), were the most eminent of the early martyrs. Ignatius was exposed to wild beasts in the Amphitheatre at Rome by order of the Emperor Trajan, A.D. 107. Polycarp was burnt alive in the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, A. D. 166. Justin Martyr suffered martyrdom during the same persecution. Early Christian writers bear testimony to the universal preaching and ever-increasing influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "There is no race of mankind," wrote Justin Martyr, "whether of Greeks or barbarians, or of any other name, whether of those who wander in tribes without fixed habitation, or tend their flocks in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered up to the Creator of the universe, in the name of the crucified Jesus." Tertullian says: "The kingdom of Christ, and His name, reaches everywhere, is believed everywhere, reigns everywhere, and is everywhere adored." "Its sound (the sound of the Gospel) has gone out into all lands, and its words unto the ends of the world." St. Mark founded the Church of Alexandria, and Eusebius says that he was its first bishop. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, in France, was the light of the Western churches, and after zealously combating heresy he suffered martyrdom at Lyons, as is generally supposed, in the persecution of Severus in 202. His work against Heresies is directed against Gnosticism, and gives an interesting picture of the doctrine and morality of his time. He was a pupil of Polycarp, and thus he may be reckoned as a disciple of St. John. From

the *Apologies for the Christians* of Justin Martyr likewise much that is interesting may be learnt about the doctrine and discipline of the primitive Church. He suffered martyrdom, it is said, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, for refusing to sacrifice to the heathen gods, nor did he shrink from the ordeal. "We wish nothing more," he said, "than to suffer for our Lord Jesus Christ." Gnosticism (under which name a number of heresies were included) long troubled the early Church. The Gnostics claimed to have a superior illumination that could not be shared by the vulgar, who were to be content with the outward and apparent meaning. Springing up in the first century, in the second century it spread throughout the Christian world, and prevailed more or less to the sixth century. Some of the Gnostic schools practised rigid asceticism, and others the grossest sensuality. Gnosticism originated in a philosophic refinement or perversion of Christianity. Christianity made great progress in Northern Africa, and flourished there for four centuries. Tertullian, one of the early Fathers, born at Carthage about A.D. 150, was the greatest apologist of Christianity in primitive times. His writings throw much light on the Church of this period; but he was narrow and bigoted, and became a believer in Montanism, which taught an inward prophetic and special illumination. St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, was likewise an illustrious Father of the African Church, over which he exercised great influence, and he opposed the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. His writings give us much information about his own times. He was beheaded at Carthage, A.D. 258, during the persecution of Valerian. The third century was marked by the cruel persecutions of Severus, Decius, and Valerian, some of which were partial, and some general; but in spite of them Christianity spread rapidly all over the Roman world, and even to remote countries. The fourth century opened with the most cruel and unsparing persecution that had yet tried the faith and endurance of Christians; and the Emperor Diocletian boasted that he had blotted out their very name. Christians were forbidden to assemble for worship under pain of death; their churches were taken from them, and all copies of the Scriptures that could be found were seized; while the bishops were especially marked for vengeance; and this state of things continued till what is called the conversion of Constantine in 312.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XVIII.

*Question.* What Roman emperors next followed the example of Nero?  
*Q.* What celebrated men of the primitive Church were martyred in the early persecutions?

*Q.* Was the Gospel very widely preached in the early ages of Christianity?

*Q.* What celebrated Father suffered martyrdom in the persecution of Severus in A.D. 202?

*Q.* What other Father and writer was martyred during the same persecution?

*Q.* What special heresy long troubled the primitive Church?

*Q.* Who was the greatest apologist of Christianity in primitive times?

*Q.* What other cruel persecutions marked the third and fourth century?

*Q.* Did Christianity increase in spite of these?

*Q.* What boast did Diocletian make?



COIN OF DECIUS.

## LESSON XIX.

Conversion of Constantine—Arianism—Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325—Athanasius—Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381—Heresy of Macedonius—Gregory of Nazianzen—Gregory of Nyssa—Cyril of Jerusalem—Cyril of Alexandria—Hilary—Ambrose—Value of the writings of the Fathers.

THE dark night of the Diocletian persecution was to break into a brighter day than any that had preceded it in the history of struggling but ever advancing Christianity.

Whether what is called the conversion of Constantine was brought about solely by the omnipotent but still small voice that is ever pleading with men, or whether he really beheld a sign from heaven, the fact remains the same, that he who was soon to be the undisputed master of the Roman world became the friend of the Christians and the protector of that despised faith which the Roman emperors had so cruelly and signally persecuted.

Constantius died at York, July 25th, 306, after having proclaimed his son Constantine his successor. But his succession was disputed, and soon no fewer than six emperors contended for the supreme power.\* In the West the rivalry

\* Galerius, Licinius, and Maximin in the East, and Maximian, Maxentius his son, and Constantine in the West, A.D. 308.

narrowed itself to a contest between Constantine and Maxentius; and Eusebius tells us that when Constantine was advancing against Maxentius, at midday he beheld in the heavens a luminous cross, and on it the words, "By this conquer"; and that by some supernatural means he was directed to emblazon this holy symbol on a banner, which should be to him an assurance of victory. Be this as it may, Constantine defeated Maxentius in three engagements, and after the last of these—fought near Rome, October 28th, 312—Maxentius was drowned in endeavouring to cross the Tiber. Constantine became sole Emperor of the West by the death of Galerius in 311; and in 323, having defeated Licinius, Emperor of the East, and put him to death, he reached the height of his ambition as sole ruler of the Roman Empire. In 313, by the edict of Milan, Constantine secured full liberty to the oppressed Christians, and restored to them the churches that had been taken from them by Diocletian; but he remained a semi-pagan in mind and actions, and was baptized only a short time before his death.

Internal troubles, however, were now to harass the Church. In A.D. 318, Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, who for some years had held uncatholic doctrines, maintained them before his ecclesiastical superiors, and thus began a contest that for many years disturbed Christendom. He asserted that "the Son was not co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, but only the first and highest of all finite beings, created out of nothing by an act of God's free will, and that He ought not to be ranked with the Father." Eusebius, Bishop of Nicodemia—afterwards Bishop of Antioch—and other eminent Churchmen, sympathised with Arius, and to settle the dispute Constantine summoned the first great and important General Council of Nicæa (Nice), in Bithynia, A.D. 325. Three hundred and eighteen bishops, besides other ecclesiastics from all parts of the Christian world, assembled here, and Arius was allowed to set forth and defend his opinions, which he did with great boldness. He maintained that "the Son of God was created out of nothing; that He had not always existed; that He was not immutable or impeccable; that it was through His free will He remained good and holy; that if He had chosen, He could as easily have sinned as not; in a word, that He was a mere creation and work of the Deity." Also, "that the Son of God was not of the same substance with the Father." It was principally by the eloquence and logic of Athanasius, then a deacon of the Bishop of Alexandria, that the Council was led to affirm the absolute unity of the Divine Essence, and the absolute equality of the Three Persons in the Holy Trinity. The opinions of Arius were

thus condemned as heretical, and the true doctrine of the Church was defined in a creed known as the Nicene Creed, and which is appointed to be used by the Church of England at her Communion Service. An imperial edict ordered that the writings of Arius should be burned; but notwithstanding all this, Arius still preached his heretical doctrines, and his party regained great power both in Church and State. Athanasius, who became Bishop of Alexandria, was three times forced to fly before the storm of persecution. The Arians, after the death of Arius (336), looked to Eusebius, Patriarch of Constantinople,\* and they became divided into three parties; but it was at last banished from the Roman Empire under Theodosius in the East (379—395), and Valentinianus in the West. The "Unitarians" are the modern representatives of Arianism. A second General or Œcumenical Council assembled at Constantinople in 381 to condemn the heresy of Macedonius, which denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and to confirm the decrees of the Council of Nice; and that part of the Nicene Creed which affirms the divinity of the Holy Ghost was then added.

Amongst the most celebrated Christian Fathers of the fourth century was Gregory Nazianzen, called the Theologian, born 329. He died somewhere about 389 A.D. The great aim of his life and writings seems to have been to maintain the orthodox or Nicæan faith against the Arian and Apollinarist heresies. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, in Cappadocia, and a Greek Church Father, was a brother of Basil the Great; and so eminent was he that the Second Nicæan Council bestowed on him the title of "Pater Patrum." Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, was born at Jerusalem about A.D. 315. His writings are of great value, as they contain a more systematic account of the doctrines and ritual of the Church than the works of any other Father. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, born towards the end of the fourth century, was a man of great energy, but very intolerant and arrogant, and a fierce persecutor of heretics, heathens, and Jews. Hilary was Bishop of Poitiers. His writings refer much to the Arian controversy and the Arian parties. He maintained the orthodox faith in the Church of France. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan 374, born 340, was esteemed as a Bishop for the mildness and gentleness and wisdom with which he maintained the privileges of the Church confided to his care. He had the courage to reprove the Emperor Theodosius for his cruelty to the rebels of Thessalonica. The works

\* Eusebius, Patriarch of Constantinople, must not be confounded with Eusebius the father of ecclesiastical history, Bishop of Cæsarea, who was the head of the semi-Arian party.

of the Fathers are very valuable for the information they contain on the doctrine and discipline of the primitive Church ; and though some minor errors and contradictions are found in them, their definitions of doctrine are remarkably unanimous. Those, indeed, who despise them, and profess to be guided by Scripture alone, "expect us," as a learned writer has well observed, "to receive without hesitation, and as undoubted verities, their own mere upstart speculations upon the sense of God's Holy Word." On the other hand, the Church of Rome falling into the opposite error, makes tradition of equal authority with Scripture.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XIX.

*Question.* What does Eusebius tell us about the conversion of Constantine ?

*Q.* Did Constantine now favour the Christians ?

*Q.* What internal trouble harassed the Church about this time ?

*Q.* What General Council condemned the teaching of Arius, and affirmed the absolute equality of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity ?

*Q.* Why was the next General Council called, and where was it held ?

*Q.* What did it add to the Nicene Creed ?

*Q.* Who were the most celebrated Christian Fathers of the fourth century ?

*Q.* In what way are the works of the Fathers valuable ?



COIN OF CONSTANTINE.

#### LESSON XX.

Heresy of Nestorius—Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431—Council of Chalcedon—Pelagianism—St. Augustine and his works—St. Chrysostom—Gradual corruption of primitive Christianity—Title of Universal Bishop—Claimed by the Patriarch of Constantinople—Gregory the Great protests against the title—Controversy about Transubstantiation.

SCARCELY had Arianism ceased to vex the Church, when, at the beginning of the fifth century, Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, promulgated a heresy regarding the divine and human natures in the Person of Jesus Christ, in whom God dwelt as in

a temple, asserting that the union was not one of nature or of person, but of will and affection only. This doctrine was condemned by the General Council of Ephesus, 431, and its opposite, the Eutychian heresy, by that of Chalcedon\*—the Fourth General Council. The Eutychian heresy, which infected the Alexandrian Church, taught that after the union of the divine and human natures in the Person of Jesus Christ, the human nature was absorbed in the divine. The Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 45, not only defined the true doctrines respecting the divine and human nature of our Lord—that the two natures could not be intermixed—but it confirmed the decrees of the three previous Councils.

Another heresy that troubled the Church (A.D. 412—418) was Pelagianism, so-called from its originator, Pelagius, a monk of Britain (or Bretagne, as some suppose), who taught that original sin was not inherited, and that man possesses in himself, and without the help of God's grace, the power to attain eternal life. Augustine, the greatest of the Latin Fathers, became the champion of the catholic and orthodox doctrine of the corruption of inherited human nature, and the perversion of the human will. St. Augustine, who was one of the greatest intellects of any age, died at Hyppo, A.D. 430, in his seventy-sixth year. Passages of his *Confessiones*, or autobiography, "have no parallel," it has been said, "except in the Psalms of David." His *De Civitate Dei* is considered his greatest work. Another celebrated Latin Father and author was John Chrysostom (golden-mouthed) (347—407), Bishop of Constantinople, and the great orator of the Eastern Church. The most valuable of his many works are his *Homilies*. The purity of the apostolic age had now passed, and "upon the foundation of apostolic doctrine and holy discipline was soon to be laid that superstructure of human inventions which distinguishes the system of the Roman communion." The celibacy of the clergy, though not yet enforced as a rule of life, was greatly encouraged, and Christianity was paganised by the worship of images (transferred from the images of heathen gods to the images of Christian saints) and relics. Again, the doctrine of purgatory was but a modification of the heathen belief of the purification of souls in a penal fire, and altogether "the advance of superstition was slow but general." Leo the Great (440) was not permitted to invade the rights of the Gallican Church, and the General Council of Chalcedon refused to allow the usurping claims of the Bishop of Rome. It was the Patriarch of Constantinople, however, and not the Pope of Rome, who

\* A city of ancient Bithynia, opposite to Byzantium, and at the entrance to the Euxine.

first claimed the title and rights of Universal Bishop ; and Gregory the Great, then Bishop of Rome, or Pope, protested most indignantly against so unwarrantable an assumption, and the title of Universal Bishop he declared to be " execrable and Satanic," and that " whoever assumed it would thereby prove himself the minister of evil, and the forerunner of Antichrist." Gregory the Great well maintained ecclesiastical discipline ; he was a man of unfeigned piety, great zeal in the propagation of the faith—by means of St. Augustine he was the missionary of the Anglo-Saxons—but he shared the superstitious veneration of his time for relics, miracles wrought by their means, and at the tombs of martyrs, and his teaching on purgatory was **more distinct and dogmatic** than any that preceded it. He pointed out, indeed, the difference between the use of images as an aid to devotion, and their being set up as objects of worship. But the worship of images was fully established before the expiration of the sixth century. Thus the fine gold had become dim, and the Church of the Middle Ages departed more and more from the purity and simple faith of apostolic teaching and apostolic times. Instead of humility, meekness, and fervent piety, pride and arrogance, luxury, and even vice, were too often the characteristics of bishops, priests, and people. Wealth and honours had succeeded to persecution and poverty, bishoprics and other high offices in the Church had become objects of ambition to worldly men. Yet in the ninth century good men were not wanting who tried to stem the ever-increasing torrent of error and superstition, and Claudius, Bishop of Turin, maintained the fallibility of the Church, the equality of all the apostles, and the doctrine of justification by faith. An important controversy regarding Christ's presence in the Eucharist, begun about A.D. 831, was started by Paschasius Radbert, who defined the doctrine of a change in the elements after consecration, now known as Transubstantiation, which was, however, denied and answered by Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Metz, and others. That by Ratramnus, who, like Paschasius, was a monk of Corbie, has been preserved. He says : " The change (in the bread and wine) is not wrought corporeally, but spiritually and figuratively. Under the veil of the material bread and wine the spiritual body and blood of Christ exist." Ælfric, the Homilist of the Anglo-Saxon Church, more than a hundred years afterwards, maintained the same doctrine in opposition to Transubstantiation.

Transubstantiation was declared authoritatively to be the doctrine of the Church of Rome, an article of faith by the Fourth Lateran Council, A.D. 1215, when it received the sanction of Pope Innocent III. The Fathers spoke of the



Eucharist as a sacrifice in a certain sense, the making a memorial, the presenting before God of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and the pleading of His merits; but the new theory of Transubstantiation carried with it a new idea of the Christian sacrifice, viz., that the priest offered the very corporal body and blood of Christ; and so it came to be received that in the Eucharist a true and proper sacrifice of Christ was offered for the sins of the dead and living.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XX.

- Question.* What heresy succeeded to Arianism?  
*Q.* By what General Council was the heresy of Nestorius condemned?  
*Q.* What was the nature of the Eutychian heresy? and by what general council was it condemned?  
*Q.* What other heresies caused much trouble?  
*Q.* What celebrated Latin Father was a great opponent of Pelagianism?  
*Q.* What illustrious Greek Father was the great orator of the Eastern Church?  
*Q.* What corruptions gradually overspread the Church of the Middle Ages?  
*Q.* What celebrated Pope showed great zeal for the propagation of the faith but shared largely in the superstitions of his time?  
*Q.* What new doctrine was taught by a monk called Paschasius Radbert?  
*Q.* Whose answer to this doctrine has been preserved?  
*Q.* What great homilist and archbishop of the Anglo-Saxon Church maintained the same thing more than one hundred years after Paschasius?  
*Q.* When was Transubstantiation first declared authoritatively to be the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church?

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#### LESSON XXI.

St. Bernard—His remarks on the state of the Church—Increasing influence of the Church of Rome—Persecution of the Vaudois—Claims of Pope Boniface VIII.—Pope and anti-Pope—Council of Constance, A.D. 1414—Cardinal Pierre D'Ailly on papal corruption—Martyrdom of Huss and Jerome of Prague—Pontificate of Alexander VI.—The Church of the Middle Ages.

ABOUT the middle of the twelfth century the piety and spirituality of St. Bernard, the last of the Fathers, was a reproof to the dry and cold scholasticism that so generally prevailed; and Luther said of him: "If there ever lived on the earth a God-fearing man and holy monk, it was St. Bernard of Clairvaux." He acquired a marvellous influence over the minds of all classes, and this was very much due, we may believe, to "the fact that he lived up to the standard of religious excellence which was at that time set before the minds of men, so far as the infirmities of human nature would permit." Yet he was a determined supporter of papal supremacy, and he so excited the religious enthusiasm of the people of France and Germany,

by his eloquence and zeal in preaching the crusade of 1146, that in some places cities, towns, and even rural districts, were almost depopulated. His voice was, however, fearlessly raised against the ecclesiastical corruptions and iniquities of his time: "The contagion," he said, "creeps through the whole Church; the wider it spreads, the more hopeless becomes the remedy; the more deeply it penetrates, the more fatal is the disease. . . . The priests are ministers of Christ and they are servants of Antichrist. . . . O vanity of vanities, and as insane as it is vain!" Bernard died in 1153, and in the absence of his severe reproofs and impassioned eloquence abuses multiplied, and the corruption and demoralisation of the Church gradually increased till the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

The Church of Rome had from the sixth century—the time of Gregory the Great—gradually extended its influence and authority over the whole of Western Europe, and had subjected to its rule and authority the old national churches which had existed in different countries (as in England) from apostolic times. Gregory VII. in the eleventh century, and Innocent III. in the twelfth, excommunicated and deposed kings, and, as Christ's vicar, claimed supreme authority over princes and potentates.

The thirteenth century opened gloomily with an atrocious persecution of the Vaudois (the inhabitants of the Piedmontese valleys), who had long maintained the purity of the faith against the corruptions and usurpations of the Romish Church; and in 1215 the famous Lateran Council, under Innocent III., asserted and confirmed the dogma of Transubstantiation, and the necessity of extirpating heresy. It was, however, Pope Boniface VIII. who pushed the papal claims and papal arrogance to an extent never dreamt of by any Pope who had preceded him. According to him, "the Roman pontiff is established by God over kings and their dominions, sovereign chief of the hierarchy in the Church below, sitting tranquilly in the throne of judgment, and with his eyes dispelling all iniquity. . . . Wherefore we declare and pronounce that it is absolutely essential to the salvation of all men that they be subject to the Roman Bishop." In the year 1300 Boniface offered full absolution to all who should make a pilgrimage to the tombs of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome, and the two millions of people who came to receive so great a blessing so heaped gold and silver upon the altar of St. Paul that rakes were used to collect it. Then, in the fourteenth century, we have Pope and anti-Pope—the Pope of Rome and the Pope of Avignon—for forty years distracting Christendom, and

demanding each one the homage of the faithful. In 1417 this great schism in the Roman Church was terminated by the election of a new Pope by the Council of Constance, 1414—1418; but the increasing corruption of the papacy and the profligacy of the clergy was testified to by its own historians. "The Church," said Cardinal Pierre D'Ailly, "has arrived at such a condition as to deserve to be governed only by the reprobate. Faith, piety, and religion have grown so cold, might almost say have become so corrupted, that scarcely any vestiges of them remain." Meanwhile divine honours were paid to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and relics, in consequence of the miracles said to be wrought by them, multiplied to an incredible extent. Huss, Rector of the University of Prague, and Jerome of Prague, were both burnt by decrees of the Council of Constance as heretics—reformers before the Reformation, A.D. 1415—16. Passing on to the pontificate of Alexander VI. (1492—1503), "we are arrested," says a recent writer, "by the utmost limits which have been assigned to papal and to human depravity. Rome was polluted by crimes which, were they not recorded by contemporary historians, might justly be deemed incredible. Iniquity was enthroned on the seat of the pontiffs; and the 'eternal city' beheld with horror immoralities which had never been equalled in the groves of heathenism. The benefices of the Church were bestowed upon the illegitimate offspring of Alexander; and his second son, Cæsar Borgia, may be ranked with the Sullas and Neros of antiquity. At length the Pope fell a victim to poison, which he had prepared for one of his cardinals." "All Rome," says Guiccardini, "rushed to St. Peter's to behold his corpse, with incredible avidity; nor could any satiate his eyes with gazing on this dead serpent, who, by his ambition and cruelty, had empoisoned the whole world." The noble Savonarola had fallen a victim to the rage of this man of sin; his reward for denouncing the spiritual evils and gross corruptions of the times was death by torture and the flames, 1498.

Yet it would be but partial and unfair to overlook the lights of the picture, and to dwell exclusively upon its darkest and deepest shadows. "Let us," says the historian of the Reformation, "render some honour at least to this Church of the Middle Ages, which succeeded that of the apostles and fathers, and which preceded that of the Reformers. Fallen and ever sinking into deeper and deeper bondage as she was, the Church was still the Church. This amounts to saying that she ever most powerfully befriended man. Bound as her hands were, they could still bless. Great servants of Jesus Christ shed for ages a benignant light around them; in the lowliest convents and in

the obscurest parish, poor monks and poor priests were to be found for the comforting of great sorrows. We must not confound the Catholic Church with the popedom. The latter was the oppressor, the former the oppressed. The Reformation, in declaring war against the one, announced deliverance to the other. Nay, it must even be admitted that the popedom itself was at times in the hands of God, who can bring good out of evil—a necessary counterpoise to the might and ambition of princes."

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXI.

*Question.* What good man in the middle of the twelfth century raised his voice against the ecclesiastical corruptions and iniquities of his time?

*Q.* From what time had the Church of Rome gradually extended its influence?

*Q.* What power did Gregory VII. and Innocent III. assume in the eleventh and twelfth centuries?

*Q.* What events in Church history marked the opening of the thirteenth century?

*Q.* What Pope pushed the papal claims to the utmost extreme?

*Q.* What great schism occurred in the Roman Church during the fourteenth century?

*Q.* How was the ever-increasing corruption of the papacy attested at this time?

*Q.* What particular corruptions of apostolic doctrine or additions to it can be specially mentioned at this period?

*Q.* What Reformers before the Reformation were martyred in 1415 and 1416 for witnessing to the truth?

*Q.* In whose pontificate did the papacy attain its utmost limits of depravity?

*Q.* Are there any lights to relieve this dark picture of the state of the Church?

### LESSON XXII.

Separation of the Eastern and Western Churches—Delegates from the Eastern Church at the Council of Ferrara—Hopes of reconciliation disappointed—Extension of the papal authority in the West—General corruption and decay—Luther—Leo X.—Indulgences.

THE quarrel or misunderstanding between the Eastern and Western Churches about jurisdiction and ecclesiastical privileges, dating more especially from the Council of Chalcedon (451), was subsequently widened by doctrinal differences, and in 1054 resulted in an open rupture and a complete separation, when Pope Leo IX. excommunicated Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople. Delegates, however, from the Western or Greek Church attended at the great Western Council of Ferrara (or Florence, at which city its deliberations terminated), in 1437, and, with one exception, they signed and agreed to its decrees; but the reconciliation was of the briefest duration, for

the admissions and acts of their delegates were indignantly repudiated by the Church they represented, and all hope of reunion between the Churches of the East and West entirely disappeared. From the sixth century the papal rule gradually spread itself in another direction until it embraced the whole of Western Europe, and the old national churches of the several countries had for the most part acknowledged the paramount authority of the Pope or Bishop of Rome. When spiritual life became well-nigh extinct in the centre of this vast machinery of ecclesiastical government, the fatal torpor was felt throughout its whole extent. The monks and priests were corrupt, the higher clergy were worldly, profligate, or ambitious, while ignorance and abuse of spiritual privileges and censures were general amongst all classes. "The papacy itself became half pagan. The Church was little cared for, even as an organ of government; it was used as an engine of self-aggrandisement and the most extravagant luxury." This general corruption and decay of spiritual life, aided indirectly by the great revival of learning, was the great and primary cause of the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

When a great work for God is to be done, how often do we see some agent or instrument specially fitted for it providentially provided. It was so in the present instance. Luther, the humble Augustine monk, was to storm the strongholds of spiritual wickedness, and with his sling of divine truth—the Word of God and the Spirit of God—he was to smite the oppressors and plunderers of Christ's spiritual kingdom. In 1510 or 1511 his mission to Rome (as deputy from the monks in their appeal against the Vicar-General) was to him a revelation, and the wickedness he beheld in the capital of Christendom kindled in him the noble indignation, that, spurning all timid counsels and braving every danger, carried him forward in his career until his great task was accomplished. "The dissolution of morals and the infidelity prevalent throughout Italy seemed to come to a climax in Rome. The secularity and profligacy of the papal court had been infectious, and the demoralisation of the Roman people was complete. Everything cried aloud for reformation. . . . The public services of the Church were performed with a perfunctory and contemptuous haste." On his return to Saxony he preached justification by faith, the free remission of sin, and the necessity of Divine grace.

Such was the state of things throughout the Roman Catholic Church, from its centre to the utmost limits of its rule; but especially in the "Eternal City,"—where he who claimed to be the Vicar and Representative of Christ upon earth sat enthroned,

—was corruption, impiety, and profanity most open and shameless. But Leo X., who had succeeded Julius II. in the papal chair, was not an Alexander VI. He was neither cruel, immoral, nor profane, and as a secular prince, a careful administrator of the material interests of the Roman Catholic Church, and a liberal patron of learning and art, he ranked higher than many of his predecessors. But although his heart was set on the completion of the magnificent church of St. Peter at Rome, begun by Julius II., he cared nothing for religion except as a political engine. He paid little attention even to its outward observances; and it was his unscrupulous sale of indulgences (by means of unprincipled agents) to replenish his treasury, and to obtain funds to finish what was to be the finest church the world had yet seen, that precipitated the memorable struggle that was destined to have such far-reaching and important results.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXII.

*Question.* How was the quarrel between the Eastern and Western Churches about jurisdiction widened?

*Q.* Was any attempt at reconciliation made?

*Q.* What was the primary cause of the Reformation?

*Q.* What man became an instrument in the hands of God for effecting it?

*Q.* What revealed to him the deep corruption of the papacy?

*Q.* Who was Pope at that time, and what was his character?

*Q.* What was the immediate cause of the Reformation?

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#### LESSON XXIII.

Meaning of an indulgence in Roman Catholic theology—Text of Tetzel's indulgences—Tetzel's language—Luther refuses to acknowledge Tetzel's indulgences—Luther's theses—Papal bull against Luther—Luther at the Diet of Worms—Confession of Augsburg—Treaty of Augsburg—Some national churches reject the papal supremacy.

ACCORDING to Roman Catholic theology indulgence "means a remission, by Church authority, to a repentant sinner of the *temporal* punishment which remains due after the sin and its eternal punishment had been remitted," and which penance and penitential observances were designed to expiate; and Pius VI. explained "that an indulgence received with due dispositions remits not alone the canonical penance attached to certain crimes in this life, but also the *temporal* punishment which would await the penitent after death to be endured by him in purgatory." But though, in theory, indulgences do not remit sin, nor promise forgiveness of future sin, nor still less give permission to commit sin, yet the indulgences granted by Leo X., or at any rate by some of his agents, did blasphemously assume such a power, and professed to open the gates of Paradise to the

most abandoned and unrepentant sinner, as is shown in the translation of the text of the indulgences of Leo X., which ran as follows :—"May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on thee, and absolve thee by the merits of His most holy Passion. And I by His authority, that of His blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most holy See granted and permitted to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatsoever manner they have been incurred ; and then from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the Apostolic See. . . . And I restore you that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism, so that if you should die now, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the heavenly Paradise shall be opened. And if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are on the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Such was the nature of the "holy" indulgences circulated and vended by Tetzel, Prior of the Dominican Friars (to whom Leo X. had granted the privilege of sale), and commissioner of the Pope. He came into Saxony in the year 1517, and commenced his odious traffic in the neighbourhood of Wittenberg, in the university of which city Luther was now a doctor in the Holy Scriptures. Unscrupulous and shameless, he vaunted his wares in the coarsest and most blasphemous language, declaring indulgences to be "the most sublime of God's favours." "They had saved more souls," he said, "than the efforts of all the apostles ; they would atone for every sin, however heinous ; they were effectual in regard to future no less than past transgressions ; they atoned for the dead no less than the living ; and whoever suffered his relatives to remain in purgatory, when a little money would release them, was guilty of the worst crime. Hence a blow was struck at all repentance," says the historian of the Reformation ; "contrition of heart was out of the question, when pardon could be obtained on terms so much easier. . . . Luther refused to absolve unless the criminals forsook their ways. They showed him their letters of impunity : no matter, he estimated them at their just value—namely, as so many pieces of waste paper. Being dismissed without absolution, and without admission to the sacraments, the deluded purchasers complained to Tetzel, who bellowed and threatened, but Luther was undaunted." He saw the scandal and the blasphemy, and determined to wage a war without quarter against it. He cared nothing for the raving of Tetzel, but exclaimed, "God willing, I will beat a hole in his drum" ; and he was as good as his word. He

not only attacked Tetzel, but posted on the door of the great church of Wittenberg his famous ninety-five theses on the doctrine of indulgences, which he offered to maintain in the university against any one who should call them in question. Although Tetzel burnt Luther's theses, and published some counter-theses of his own, he was forced to retract; his infamous traffic was at an end, the Reformation had begun. At last Leo X. (who had called Luther's attack on Tetzel and his indulgences "a squabble among the friars," and shown reluctance to molest or deal harshly with the intrepid monk) fulminated a bull against him, which was publicly burnt in presence of the doctors, students, and people of Wittenberg. Summoned to the Diet of Worms, which the recently-crowned Emperor Charles V. had convened, he courageously defended his conduct and his doctrines before the assembled princes and statesmen of Germany, and called upon the emperor and the states "to take into consideration the evil condition of the Church, lest God should visit the empire and German nation with His judgments."

Finally, the Religious Peace of Augsburg, 1555, secured the rights of the Protestants, and terminated the period of the Reformation in Germany.

In Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Holland the national Churches of these several countries rejected the papal supremacy, and reformed their doctrine by Holy Scripture, interpreted in the light of primitive and apostolic times. In other lands—in Austria, France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal—the Roman Catholic Church and doctrine held their ground, and remained the Church and the faith of the great bulk of the population, although in some of them certain portions of the people separated from the Church, and formed separate and independent communities. The remaining lessons will give an outline of the history the Church in Britain.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXIII.

*Question.* What is the meaning of an indulgence in Roman Catholic theology?

*Q.* But though in theory indulgences do not profess to remit sin, did not those granted by Leo X. blasphemously profess to forgive all sins, past, present, and to come, to open the gates of paradise to every one who purchased them?

*Q.* How did Luther act with reference to these indulgences?

*Q.* How did Leo X. deal with Luther and the Reformation?



## LESSON XXIV.

Ancient British Church—Its apostolic origin—First known historical fact about it—Invasion of the Saxons—Heathen England.

WE have seen that the apostles not only preached the Gospel but founded churches, and ordained faithful men to minister in them and to take charge of them. Thus every Church owed its origin to an apostle or to apostolic men, to whom the apostles had given authority; and every Church was governed either directly by the apostles, or by men appointed and ordained by them. Thus Timothy was appointed to have the oversight of the Church of Ephesus, and Titus was overseer or bishop of the churches of Crete; and congregations that had not this origin were considered heretical in the early days of the Church. Tertullian writing of such congregations in his time (the second century) says: "Let them show us the origin of their churches, and give us a catalogue of their bishops in an exact succession from first to last, from which it shall appear that their first bishop had some apostle or some apostolic man living in the time of the apostles for his author or immediate successor. For thus it is that apostolic churches make their reckoning. The Church of Smyrna counts up to Polycarp, ordained by St. John; the Church of Rome to Clemens, ordained by St. Peter; and so all other churches in like manner exhibit their first bishops ordained by the apostles, by whom the apostolical seed was propagated and conveyed to others."

Now it can be shown that the ancient historical Church of this country, now called the Church of England, is the oldest institution in the realm—so old, indeed, that its history goes back to pre-historic times and is lost in the haze of antiquity. Nevertheless it is certain that it was planted here, if not by one of the apostles, yet certainly by their immediate successors. The vague phrases of the earliest Christian writers cannot be taken for more than they are worth; but Clement of Rome, a companion of St. Paul, says that St. Paul "travelled even to the utmost bounds of the West"; and St. Jerome tells us that the same apostle preached in the western parts, and from the Eastern to the Western Ocean; and we have seen that Justin Martyr, in the second century, declares that "there is no race of mankind among whom prayers and thanksgiving are not offered up in the name of the crucified Jesus." Rather later, too, Irenæus spoke of the faith of Celtic churches, and the ancient Britons were of that race; and Tertullian, at the end of the second century, plainly mentions districts of Britain

that, though inaccessible to the Roman arms, had submitted to the yoke of Christ.

But to come to historical facts in connection with the British Church : we learn from history that British bishops were present at some of the earliest Councils of the Church. The Council of Arles in France, A.D. 314, included Eborius, Bishop of York ; Restitutus, Bishop of London, and Adelphius, Bishop of *Colonia Londinensium*, or (as is probable) Caerleon-on-Usk. At Sardica (A.D. 347) British bishops supported the orthodox view in opposition to Arius ; and again, at the Council of Ariminum, A.D. 360, we find British bishops accepting the bounty of the emperor for the payment of their expenses. Thus we are assured that Christian churches, possessing the apostolic orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, were fully established, and must have existed for many years in Britain.

But the country we now call England was destined to become again the stronghold of heathenism. In A.D. 411, the Romans, who had invaded Britain (A.D. 40), and conquered it (A.D. 40—84), and civilised it, withdrew their forces from this remote province of their empire to defend their own capital against Alaric and his Goths. Then it was that Britain became a prey to savage tribes. The Picts leaving their mountain fastnesses and allying themselves with the marauding Scots from Ireland, harassed the Britons on the north, while a race of sea-pirates—the English—pillaged the southern coast. Picts and Scots and English were too strong for the unprotected Britons, and so they made terms with the fiercest of their foes, and the English from Jutland, led by their chiefs Hengist and Horsa, landed at Ebbsfleet, in the Isle of Thanet, and speedily drove back the Picts to their strongholds. But the Britons soon quarrelled with their dangerous allies. Disputes about pay and rations ended in open hostility, and the English victory of Aylesford was followed by the complete conquest of the Britons, who were gradually driven by the ruthless strangers into those parts of the island we now call Wales and Devon and Cornwall, and in the course of time “the Briton disappeared from the greater part of the land which had been his own, and the tongue, the religion, the laws of the English conquerors reigned without a rival from Essex to the Severn, and from the British Channel to the Firth of Forth.” Thus the Britons were driven out of England, extirpated or enslaved, and Christianity shared their fate ; for the barbarous and heathen invaders slew the priests at the altar and burned the churches to the ground. Then, in place of these, temples arose to Odin, in which bloody sacrifices were offered, while the people revelled in feasting and excess.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXIV.

*Question.* When was the ancient British Church supposed to be founded?

*Q.* What is the first historical fact we know of about the British Church?

*Q.* What does this fact make plain?

*Q.* Did British Christianity receive any great check?

*Q.* What took the place of the Christian churches and people of Britain?

## LESSON XXV.

Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons—The mission of St. Augustine—Aidan and the missionaries of the Celtic or Irish Church—The Church in England and the Church of England—Celebrated men of the Anglo-Saxon Church,

THE Venerable Bede, the greatest ornament of the Anglo-Saxon Church, relates the interesting though now hackneyed story of a time when English boys were pitied by a Christian man because they were pagans. He says that Gregory, afterwards Gregory the Great, and one of the best of the Bishops of Rome, or Popes, going one day into the slave-market at Rome was greatly interested in three young boys, who with their fair complexion, light flaxen hair and bright expression of countenance, were so different to the dark swarthy and tawny captives from Africa, Greece, Syria, and Egypt; and asking what part of the world they came from, he was told that they came from Britain. But were these children, so innocent, so beautiful, Christians or Pagans? he inquired. They were pagans, he was told; "Alas!" said he, sighing deeply, "more is the pity that faces so lovely should be the possession of the prince of darkness, that such grace of outward appearance should accompany minds without the grace of Christianity." Then he would know the name of their nation. They were "Angles" or English. "Well," said he, "rightly are they called Angles, for they have the faces of angels, and they ought to be fellow-heirs of angels in heaven." Wishing still to know more about them, he next inquired the name of the province from which they were brought, and being told they were Deirans, that they were from Deira (the name of the country between the Tyne and the Humber, including Durham and Yorkshire) "Well," he replied (still playing upon words), "rightly are they called Deirans, plucked as they are from God's ire (*de ira Dei*, from the anger of God), and called to the mercy of Christ." One more question he asked, "Who was the king of the province?" "Alla," was the answer. "Allelujah!" he exclaimed (as the name recalled to his mind the Hebrew word of praise which

he had introduced into the Roman service), "Allelujah! the praise of God their Creator shall be sung in those parts." Nor were they vain words, for he went straight to the Pope and got his leave to go on a mission to the English nation. Permission granted, he left Rome secretly that no obstacle might be put in the way of his departure; but instead of becoming the first Archbishop of Canterbury (as he probably would had his expedition been carried out), the love of the people brought him back to Rome. Even then he did not forget his desire to Christianise the English nation, for when, in a few years, he became Pope he sent Prior Augustine and his forty monks as missionaries to the land which had been the home of the fair-haired boys whose outward beauty, but mental darkness, had made so deep an impression upon him in the slave-market of Rome.

Landing at Ebbsfleet (597), the very spot in the Isle of Thanet where (more than a hundred years before) the English first set foot in Britain, Ethelbert, King of Kent, and the most powerful king in Britain at that time, who had married a Christian wife, Bertha, daughter of the King of the Parisians, received the strangers with a prudent though kindly caution. Listening patiently to the long sermon that Augustine delivered through interpreters he had brought with him from Gaul, he answered with more wisdom and liberality than is to be found in many modern speeches, "Your words and promises are very fair, but as they are new to us and of uncertain import, I cannot approve of them so far as to forsake at once the gods of my fathers"; but he promised them shelter and protection and full permission to preach the religion of Christ. A residence was assigned them in *Durovernum* (Canterbury), and they had the use of St. Martin's Church, near Canterbury, built in Roman times, in which the queen worshipped. They entered the city in procession, bearing aloft a silver cross, and a banner on which was a picture of our Lord, chanting the while their solemn litany: "Turn from this city, O Lord, Thine anger and wrath, and turn it from Thy Holy House, for we have sinned. Alleluia!" Here they lived such holy lives of self-denial and prayer, and preached so earnestly that Ethelbert very soon professed himself a convert, and on the first Christmas after the arrival of Augustine and his fellow-missionaries, 10,000 of the men of Kent are said to have been baptized in the river Swale. The under Kings of Essex, East Anglia, and Northumbria in due time received the faith. In 597, Augustine went to Arles, and was there consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury and Metropolitan of England; and in little more than a quarter of a century from the time

of his first landing in England, Augustine and his fellow-labourers had planted a Church and set up Divine worship in four out of the seven English kingdoms. Three of them—Northumbria, Essex, and East Anglia—returned to paganism when pagans became their rulers; in East Anglia, it is true, Christianity had been never more than tolerated.

But it was to the Celtic mission—to the apostolic labours of Aidan and Finan and other fathers of the Irish Church who had founded monasteries or missionary stations at Iona\* and Lindisfarne†—not to the Roman mission, that the evangelisation of one-half of England was due. They Christianised Mercia and Sussex, and raised again the standard of the cross in Northumbria, Essex, and East Anglia. Still the Church *in* England did not become the Church *of* England till the time of Archbishop Theodore, 673 A.D., when the several churches of the still separate Saxon kingdoms and the ancient British Church were fused into one, and the authority of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, was acknowledged throughout what then became the national Church of England, rather more than 150 years before the union of the whole of England, in 827, under Egbert, who called himself “the King of the English.” The further organisation of the Church—the subsequent subdivision of the dioceses, as well as the commencement of the parochial system, the institution of parishes—has likewise been ascribed to Theodore.

The Anglo-Saxon Church produced many names that should be dear to Englishmen—Cædmon wrote the first true English (670) poem (a paraphrase of the history of the Old and New Testament) at St. Hilda’s Monastery on the West Cliff at Whitby. Aldhelm, another poet, was made first Bishop of Sherborne, and died in 709. The Venerable Bede (born 673) began to write during Aldhelm’s lifetime. He was a monk in the monastery at Jarrow, and the greatest scholar and writer of his time, and probably of the age. To his Ecclesiastical History we owe almost all our knowledge of English history to 731. This pious, gentle, and humble Christian man died May 26, 735. Alcuin (born, probably, A.D. 735), a poet, was trained in the Monastery at York, and was made its librarian and master of its school. Ælfric, Abbot of Cerne, translated most of the Old Testament, and was the homilist of the Anglo-Saxon Church (990).

\* A rocky island of the Hebrides, lying off the south-western extremity of the island of Mull.

† A little island on the Northumbrian coast, chief of the Farn Islands.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXV.

*Question.* By what means were the Anglo-Saxon tribes converted to Christianity ?

*Q.* What was the name of the principal Roman missionary, and what reception did he meet with ?

*Q.* Was the whole of England converted by the Roman missionaries ?

*Q.* Who was the first Archbishop of Canterbury ?

*Q.* When did the several Anglo-Saxon Churches and the British Church unite and become the Church of England ?

*Q.* To whom was the subdivision of the dioceses, and the commencement of the parochial system, said to be due ?

*Q.* Did the Anglo-Saxon or early English Church produce any good and clever men ?

## LESSON XXVI.

Effect of the Norman Conquest on the Church of England—Principles of the English Reformation—Persecution of the Reformers and Protestants by Queen Mary Tudor—The Puritans separate from the Church.

THE Norman Conquest of England and the high-handed mode of government that followed it, were certain to be felt in the Church no less than in the State, for the king had scarcely less power over the one than he had in ruling the other. Stigand, the patriotic Archbishop of Canterbury, was deposed ; Lanfranc, an abbot and the ablest ecclesiastic of Normandy, a man of learning, piety, and much practical wisdom, was consecrated his successor ; and many Normans were appointed to sees and abbey and high offices in the Church, of which Lanfranc was now the ruling spirit. But as the Normans possessed a higher civilisation than the English of that period—worshipping in statelier shrines, and living more within the influence of continental art and science and learning—the Church of England profited by this infusion of a foreign element, at least in externals, for they built many cathedrals, abbeys, and churches, in an improved style of architecture. At the same time the Norman influence brought the English Church more and more under the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, and it opened a way for the introduction of the novelties and corruptions of mediæval Christianity.

The Pope's supremacy over the Church of England continued undisturbed till Henry VIII. quarrelled with Clement about his divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Arragon ; and in 1534, by the Act of Supremacy, Parliament enacted that the king "shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only Supreme Head in earth of the Church of England, and that he shall have all the jurisdictions, authorities, &c., to

the said dignity belonging"; and in the same year the Convocation of Canterbury and the Convocation of York declared severally and separately "that the Bishop of Rome hath no greater jurisdiction conferred on him by God in this kingdom of England than any other foreign bishop." The rejection of papal supremacy was followed by the gradual reformation of doctrine which was begun by Convocation in 1536. The worship of the Blessed Virgin Mary; unscriptural additions to the doctrine of the Holy Communion; masses for the dead; indulgences and saint worship were all given up; and the Church, taking Holy Scripture interpreted not according to men's fancies, but by the teaching, creeds, and practices of the primitive and undivided Church, reformed herself and repudiated the corruptions and superstitions of the Middle Ages. Thus, like some grand old cathedral overgrown with ivy and parasitic foliage and half-buried in rubbish is cleared of all that hides its beauty and is endangering its stability, the Church of England shook off the corruptions, usurpations, and superstitions that marred its beauty and allied it to the Church whose bishop claimed universal authority, and which in the arrogance of its pride refused to acknowledge error and abuses, and to institute the most necessary reforms. But it was no new Church. It still traced its growth to apostolic times and its orders of ministry to apostolic authority. For 1,500 years there was no other or separate community of Christians in the country. The Church of England is the oldest institution in the realm; "and all who profess themselves Christians in this kingdom, are or have been in her communion, or are the descendants of forefathers who lived, worshipped, and died in her fellowship. So that she may well be called the mother Church of the whole of the English people." Though the Reformation was a great and incalculable benefit to the Church and people of this country, and though many concerned in it were good men raised up by God and guided by Him, it cannot be denied that some of its promoters acted from worldly, self-interested, or merely political motives, and it was accompanied by violence and rapine, and by much that was cruel and unjust. Harsh measures, however, persecution, and religious intolerance were the characteristics of the period; but God, who can bring good out of evil, sometimes inflicts His judgments and accomplishes His purposes by unworthy agents, and indirectly by measures that considered in themselves can only meet with reprobation.

Monastic institutions had, in their day, been schools of learning, places of calm retreat for study and self-denying piety,

refuges for the afflicted and needy, and, more than all, centres for radiating the light of Christianity and civilisation in regions of darkness and barbarism; but abuses had crept in, and the whole system probably needed to be modified by some well-devised measure of reform. Cromwell, however, the unscrupulous minister of an unscrupulous and cruel master, wanted their lands and money for King Henry's use and for schemes of his own, and so he suppressed them with savage and relentless cruelty, confiscating their estates and quelling all resistance by a series of judicial murders.

In the short reign of Edward VI. doctrinal reform became more sweeping; but the national Church still retained its ancient organisation and its connection with the State.

Queen Mary and her party sought to extinguish the English Reformation in blood, and during the three years the persecution lasted 277 men and women were martyred at the stake.

The final settlement of the Reformed Church took place in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The Thirty-nine Articles received the assent of Convocation, January 1563. In 1573, the Puritans having failed to mould the national Church after their own fashion—their scheme of Church reform included the Presbyterian form of Church government, a Church without bishops, and the doctrine and ritual of the foreign Calvinistic reformers—formed themselves into a separate sect.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXVI.

*Question.* In what way did the Norman Conquest affect the Church of England?

*Q.* How long did the Pope's supremacy over the Church of England continue?

*Q.* Was the spiritual supremacy conferred upon the King or Queen of England?

*Q.* What followed the rejection of the papal supremacy?

*Q.* By what standard did the Church reform her doctrine?

*Q.* Did the Reformation sweep away the Church of England, and then organise another Church?

### LESSON XXVII.

Effect of the Great Rebellion and the Civil War on the Church of England—The Puritans—Archbishop Laud and the Puritan Parliament.

SOON after Charles I. succeeded to the throne causes came into operation that were to prove very disastrous to the Church, the king, and the country. During the Tudor period the Parliaments had been little more than the slaves of the reigning



sovereign, and it seemed that England would soon become as absolute a monarchy as any in Europe. James I. had a very exaggerated notion of the royal prerogative and of the kingly power. "As it is atheism and blasphemy," he said, "to dispute what God can do, so it is presumption and a high contempt in a subject to dispute what a king can do, or to say that a king cannot do this or that." But when Charles I. began to reign the people were waking up to a sense of the danger that threatened public liberty, and patriots declared that Englishmen were not likely to leave to posterity the freedom they had inherited from their forefathers, if kings were permitted any longer thus to override the limits of the Constitution. Charles I., however, who had been educated in the Tudor and Stuart notions of the royal prerogative, did not perceive that neither the temper of the nation, nor the circumstances of the time, nor the weakened feeling of reverence for the kingly authority, caused by the immorality and imbecility of James's Government, would permit him to exercise the almost despotic authority of his predecessors. He wished to govern justly and for the good of his subjects, but he had bad advisers; and when, conscious of right intentions, he found his will thwarted and his power limited, he was offended, and he thought it lawful to dissemble—to say one thing and mean another—when dealing with subjects whom he regarded as rebellious. On the other hand, the Puritans—those extreme reformers and ultra-Protestants, who had adopted the religious opinions of Calvin, and who wished to re-construct the Church of England on the model of the Genevan Church, and to substitute its service book for the English Book of Common Prayer—had been growing more and more powerful since the days of Elizabeth, and their principles were very widely diffused. The Puritans cared nothing for the authority and traditions of the apostolic Church. What the Jews did under Moses and Joshua was, they thought, much more to the purpose. To smite God's enemies and their own was both a duty and a privilege. They were no respecters of persons. They cared no more for kings than commoners when they regarded them as foes; and to kill a godless prince—a prince who did not favour their views—was but a "hewing Agag in pieces before the Lord." Some few of them were moderate Episcopalians, and some were godly and conscientious men; but most of them rejected bishops utterly, who were in their eyes little better than prophets of Baal. Most of them were Presbyterians in Church government, or Independents; and these last, who hated Presbyterianism almost as much as Episcopacy, were in politics Republicans. In their eyes

everything that was not according to the Puritan pattern was "Romanism." They not only saw the Pope in a pair of candlesticks, but in crosses and the sign of the cross in baptism, painted windows, carved work, the use of the surplice and any kind of vestment (which they denounced as the rags of Romanism and the mark of the beast), and in every symbol and sacrament of the Christian faith. The events of Elizabeth's and James's reigns, and the strides that Popery was making on the Continent, had excited the people of England against it, and Puritan views infected more or less nine-tenths of the Englishmen of that period. The struggle between the king and his people began with his first Parliament, the majority of which were Puritans, and it lasted only three weeks. In the year 1628 he called a third Parliament, but the quarrel was so bitter between it and the king that it was soon dissolved, and several of its members were imprisoned. Then for eleven years (1629—1640) Charles governed England without one; but he had no fixed intention of abolishing Parliaments altogether: his idea was rather to wait until the temper of the nation would allow him to summon a Parliament without danger. During this period of "tyranny" Thomas Wentworth, afterwards Earl of Strafford, and Laud (who was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633) were the king's principal advisers. Laud was a member of the tyrannical Courts of High Commission and Star Chamber, but there is proof that he often tempered the judgments of these tribunals with mercy.

Charles, however, was forced at last to summon a Parliament to grant him the means of quelling an insurrection of the Scotch caused by a new Liturgy (prepared by Archbishop Laud, and based on the English Book of Common Prayer) which the king had ordered to be read in their churches. This Parliament declaring that redress of grievances must precede the grant of supplies, Charles dissolved it at the end of three weeks; but his necessities soon drove him to call another, which met at Westminster November, 1640, and has become famous in history under the name of the Long Parliament. Strafford was condemned by Bill of Attainder, and executed May, 1641. Laud, who had done all he could to stem the flood of Puritanism which threatened to sweep away all the landmarks of the Church, could not expect to escape the vengeance of the Puritan Parliament, and he was thrown into prison March 1, 1640—1641. "I stayed at Lambeth till the evening," he wrote in his diary, "to avoid the gaze of the people. I went to evening prayer in my chapel. The Psalms of the day and chapter fifty of Isaiah gave me great comfort

God make me worthy of it and fit to receive it. As I went to my barge hundreds of my poor neighbours stood there and prayed for my safety and return to my house. For which I bless God and them." After an imprisonment of four years, in spite of a royal pardon, and by virtue of a prerogative of Parliament (a Bill of Attainder), as arbitrary as any the king had ever made use of, Laud was beheaded January 10th, 1645. The aged prelate of seventy-two died a martyr to his conscientious resistance to the schemes of the Puritan faction. The churches were in a state of neglect and disorder, which to him was intolerable; and for trying to remedy this he was denounced as a Papist and an innovator. Prynne charged him with "superstition and blasphemy" because he consecrated churches according to ancient custom, and a service that had been used by Bishop Andrewes. He replaced the Communion tables (which for half a century had been dragged out into the middle of the aisle) in the chancels of the several churches, and guarded them from profanation by a rail. His own chapel of Lambeth House he restored to something like what it had been before Puritanism and Archbishop Abbot made it utterly bald and bare. In short, "his resolve was to raise the Church of England to what he conceived to be its real position as a branch, though a reformed branch, of the great Catholic Church throughout the world," and he "protested alike against the innovations of Rome and the innovations of Calvin"; but to the Puritanism of his time "Laud and the High Churchmen whom he headed seemed a danger more really formidable than Popery."

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXVII.

*Question.* In what principles had Charles I. been educated, and how did he act?

*Q.* What great and growing party was specially opposed not only to these principles but generally to episcopacy and the Church Book of Common Prayer?

*Q.* Had Puritan views become at all general amongst the people of England?

*Q.* What prelate of the Church of England was imprisoned for four years and then put to death by the Puritan Parliament (January 10, 1645)?

*Q.* Was Laud really a Romaniser, as the Puritans declared?

## LESSON XXVIII.

The Solemn League and Covenant—Episcopacy abolished—Ejection of the clergy loyal to Church and King—Sufferings of the clergy—"Committee of Religion"—Religious anarchy—Proscription of the Book of Common Prayer—The Restoration—Act of Uniformity of 1662—James II. tries to restore Popery—William III.—The King or Queen of England neither to be a Papist nor to marry a Papist.

At last the leaders of the Puritan Parliament resolved to crush the king, and to bring the war they were waging against him to a triumphant issue by aid of the Scotch. To purchase this they signed the Solemn League and Covenant, and (September 23rd, 1643) swore "with uplifted hands" to "bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion"; . . . "that we, and our posterity after us, may as brethren live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to live in the midst of us"; and the Covenant further stipulated for the extirpation of "Popery, prelacy, superstition, schism, and profaneness." Thus, under the pretence of "the reformation of religion," "the honour of the king," and "the peace of the three kingdoms," the clergy and people of England were compelled to renounce the order, worship, and teaching of the Church of England. The use of the Book of Common Prayer was forbidden by heavy penalties and punishments (St. Bartholomew's Day, 1645), not only in churches, but even in private houses. "It was a crime in a child to read by the bedside of a sick parent one of those beautiful collects which had soothed the griefs of forty generations of Christians." Episcopacy was abolished, and the loyal clergy who refused to accept the Presbyterian form of Church government, were turned out of their livings; and the Puritan leaders, who had so fiercely denounced the Courts of High Commission and Star Chamber, instituted a "Committee of Religion," or "Committee of Scandalous Ministers," with branch committees in every town in England. "Parson-hunting" became a profitable trade. Paid agents, or hired false-witnesses, might ruin any minister by merely bringing accusations against him, and the clergy who observed the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, and preached its doctrines, were punished for "superstition and false doctrine." "Some of the Puritans were indeed men of great personal piety," but the greater number of them were but "sanctified hypocrites," who called the persecution and robbery of the clergymen "the spoiling of the Egyptians." Many clergymen were confined in jails and hulks, or were left with their families to starve; and the most harrowing details of this persecution

are given in Walker's "Sufferings of the Clergy." Several thousand of the clergy were thus cast out and their livings filled by Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, and even by laymen. Religious anarchy and the wildest fanaticism followed political confusion. Edwards, a Puritan writer of the time, draws a terrible picture of the "heresies, horrid blasphemies, libertinism, and fearful anarchy" of that period. The sole rule of the Parliament as the one power in the State, was followed by the military Dictatorship of Cromwell and the religious ascendancy of the Independents; but with the restored monarchy of 1660 came the rightful government of the Church. Her bishops, and order, and liturgy were restored to her, and by the Act of Uniformity of 1662 all her ministers were required to conform to the doctrine and discipline of the Church in which they ministered, to accept the Book of Common Prayer, to receive episcopal ordination, and to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles. There was no persecution; time for consideration was allowed, and all who conformed were left in possession of their livings, except in the few instances in which these livings were claimed by their original holders. By far the greater number accepted the new order of things. From 800 to 2,000 ministers rejected the terms and left the Church; but their only real grievance was their being forbidden to join themselves with their followers into distinct religious communities. Religious toleration, however, was not held in those times by any one party whatever that happened to be in the ascendant; but the laws that disallowed of Conventicles were not made by the Church, but by the Parliament. Some of the Puritans were as intolerant and persecuting as any mediæval inquisitor, and they put down "heresy" with as strong and cruel a hand; while their views of Church authority—when the Church was one of their own making—were higher than priest or Pope ever dreamt of in the eighteenth century; toleration meant liberty for themselves, but for no other Church or sect, and even in our own day the same spirit is by no means extinct. Charles II. was for granting toleration on certain conditions, but the House of Commons petitioned him, soon after the Act of Uniformity of 1662 had passed, that its provisions might be maintained in full force against Nonconformists; and he withdrew his declaration of indulgence at the request of Parliament. James II. soon made it evident that his intention was to make the Church of England not merely Catholic—as Laud had wished it to be—but *Roman* Catholic. He began by giving offices and benefices of the Church of England to Roman Catholics, as, for instance, the important deanery of

Christ Church, Oxford ; and he continued his measures with a high hand, sending seven bishops to the Tower for firmly resisting his demands ; but his crowning insult was his demand that the infamous Judge Jeffries should be chosen Chancellor of the University of Oxford. As the result of all this William of Orange was invited to come over and deliver England from Popery and the tyranny of the king. James II. fled, and in due time the Prince of Orange took his place on the English throne as William III. ; and it was enacted that henceforth no King or Queen of England should be a Papist or marry a Papist.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXVIII.

*Question.* What engagement did the Parliament enter into (Sept. 23, 1643) that compelled the clergy and people of England to renounce the order, worship, and teaching of the Church of England ?

*Q.* What followed the abolition of episcopacy and the forcing of Scotch Presbyterianism on the Church of England ?

*Q.* How were the livings of the expelled clergy filled ?

*Q.* Were the Bishops and Liturgy of the Church ever restored to her ?

*Q.* Did any ministers leave the Church, and were they allowed to form congregations of their own ?

*Q.* Were the laws against toleration or religious liberty made by the Church or by the State, and did Nonconformists consistently advocate religious liberty at that time ?

*Q.* What danger threatened the Church of England in the reign of James II. ?

*Q.* What was the consequence ?

*Q.* What law was enacted about the religion of the sovereign of England ?

#### LESSON XXIX.

The Church of England in the eighteenth Century—Whitfield and the Wesleys—"Evangelical" revival—The Church of England revival of the present day—God's dealings with mankind viewed as one connected whole.

IN 1738, when the Church of England was in a state of apathy and torpor and religious deadness, three Churchmen, Whitfield and the two Wesleys, were the means of reviving the languishing faith of the day by preaching boldly and with power the doctrines and eternal truths of the Gospel—the necessity of personal piety, a holy life, and salvation through a crucified and risen Saviour. Thus lifting up the standard of the Cross by preaching repentance, forgiveness of sins, and salvation through Jesus Christ amongst the masses in the large towns and neglected districts—in mines, collieries, and the manufacturing centres—they struck a sympathetic chord in the popular mind. Their moving eloquence, "by its intense reality, its earnestness

of belief, its deep tremulous sympathy with the sin and sorrow of mankind," but above all by the power of the Holy Name, and because its constant theme was Jesus Christ and the story of the Cross—Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners and His love for sinners—found its way straight to the hearts of the millions who till then had never heard the message of peace and reconciliation. Charles Wesley was the "Sweet Singer" of the mission, and his hymns sent a thrill of enthusiasm and ecstatic delight through untold numbers of his countrymen; while John Wesley, with his learning, literary skill, cool judgment, and power of organisation, controlled the fiery zeal and curbed the extravagance both of his fellow-labourers and followers. The apostles of the new religious revival carried their lives in their hands, and although mobbed, ducked, and stoned, allowed nothing to turn them from their course; but they soon found the pulpits of the Church—in which too often the driest essays on dogma, morality, and abstract virtue were substituted for the life-giving truths of the Gospel—closed against them. They were almost forced into Nonconformity. Whitfield diverged into an extravagant Calvinism, and he gave rise to "Lady Huntingdon's Connexion and Welsh Calvinism"; but Wesley "to the last clung passionately to the Church of England, and looked on the body he had formed as but a lay society in full communion with it." He would not allow his lay preachers to administer the sacraments and to assume the functions of the episcopally ordained minister; nor, in England, did he ever sanction the separation of his followers into a Church or sect separate from the Church of England. In the rules he laid down for the guidance of his preachers he says: "How should an assistant be qualified for his charge? By loving the Church of England, and by resolving not to separate from it. Let this be well observed. I fear that when the Methodists leave the Church God will leave them. Oh, use every means to prevent this!" . . . After Wesley's death, however (in 1795), the Methodists seceded, and formed a separate religious community; and now there are five distinct Methodist Churches, while the number of dissenting bodies in England exceeds 150.

But the Church was roused from its lethargy, and the "Evangelical" school, of which Cecil and Newton, Venn, Simeon, Scott and a few others were the leaders, preached within the Church those vital principles of the Gospel that the Wesleys and their fellow-labourers had carried to the millions outside its influence, and so prepared the way for the great Church revival of the present day, which includes the building and restoration of churches and the inculcation of Church principles, apostolic

order, and primitive Catholic truth. Thus we have traced in outline the history of the Church in England from the earliest times to the times in which we live, and glanced at its vicissitudes, whether as the ancient British Church, the Anglo-Saxon Church, or the Church of a united England. At the Reformation (as we have seen) it made no new beginning ; but throwing off the usurped supremacy of the Pope, asserting its rightful independence, and purging itself from all corruptions both in doctrine and practice, taking for its guide Holy Scripture and the primitive faith, it continued a branch—but a reformed branch—of the Catholic Church. So we have compared it to some grand and ancient cathedral which had become marred and hidden by an overgrowth of ivy and other parasitic plants, that is cleansed and restored to its original condition. The Church so renovated was no new building, and it had no new foundation. Its massive and ancient walls, and pillars, and towers, and battlements were all the same ; but they were stripped of what concealed their beauty, and would have hastened their decay. In the stormy days of the seventeenth century the Church of England may be compared to some noble vessel that, water-logged and half a wreck, had become the prey of a gang of pirates, whose pleasure it was to mar and to spoil the goodly craft upon which they had laid their lawless and desperate hands. Her ministers were persecuted, robbed, vilified, and even put to death, while her ancient order and constitution were ruthlessly swept away. But though cast down, she was not destroyed, and in due time her rights and privileges were restored her. And now, having shaken off the torpor and indifference and worldliness that, like a withering blight, bade fair at one time to sap the life that open enemies had not been able to destroy, she flourishes at the present moment in more than pristine beauty and usefulness. Nor can any other religious community in this country compare with her. She alone is the representative of apostolic Christianity, and the possessor of apostolic authority. She alone is the Church of the past and the Church of the people.

In this manual we have endeavoured to trace in one brief but continuous and unbroken narrative God's dealings with mankind, and to view them *as one connected whole*, from the first promise of a Messiah to the fulfilment of that promise in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the setting up and progress of His kingdom upon earth.

By men chosen of God, by a family, by a nation, by priests and sacrifices and types (or pictures of things to come) that promise was repeated, confirmed, and kept continually in mind. It was the hope of our first parents, of Noah and Enoch, of



Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and of the whole Jewish people. Then, when this hope and this promise had been realised by the coming of the Holy One, and He had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, we saw how the types and shadows of the Jewish religion were merged into the realities of the Christian Church; and we have watched the progress of that Church until the few disciples who met together on the day of Pentecost, to pray and to wait for the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, have become a great multitude, gathered out of every people and nation and language, who, acknowledging one Lord, and having one faith and one hope, form Christ's Holy Catholic Church throughout the world which He has promised to be with, and against which He has declared the gates of hell shall not prevail—the only Ark in which we may find safety amidst the storms of this world, and those means of grace ordained by Christ Himself, by help of which we may finally attain to everlasting life through Him.

#### QUESTIONS ON LESSON XXIX.

*Question.* In what state was the Church of England when, in 1738 three Churchmen, Whitfield and the two Wesleys, began to preach to the masses, and what was the effect of their mission?

*Q.* What name was given to Wesley and his followers, and did they continue in communion with the Church?

*Q.* Did they follow his injunctions?

*Q.* By what name were those ministers of the Church known who, like the Methodists, were very zealous for the vital principles of the Gospel, and for what did this movement prepare the way?

THE END.

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